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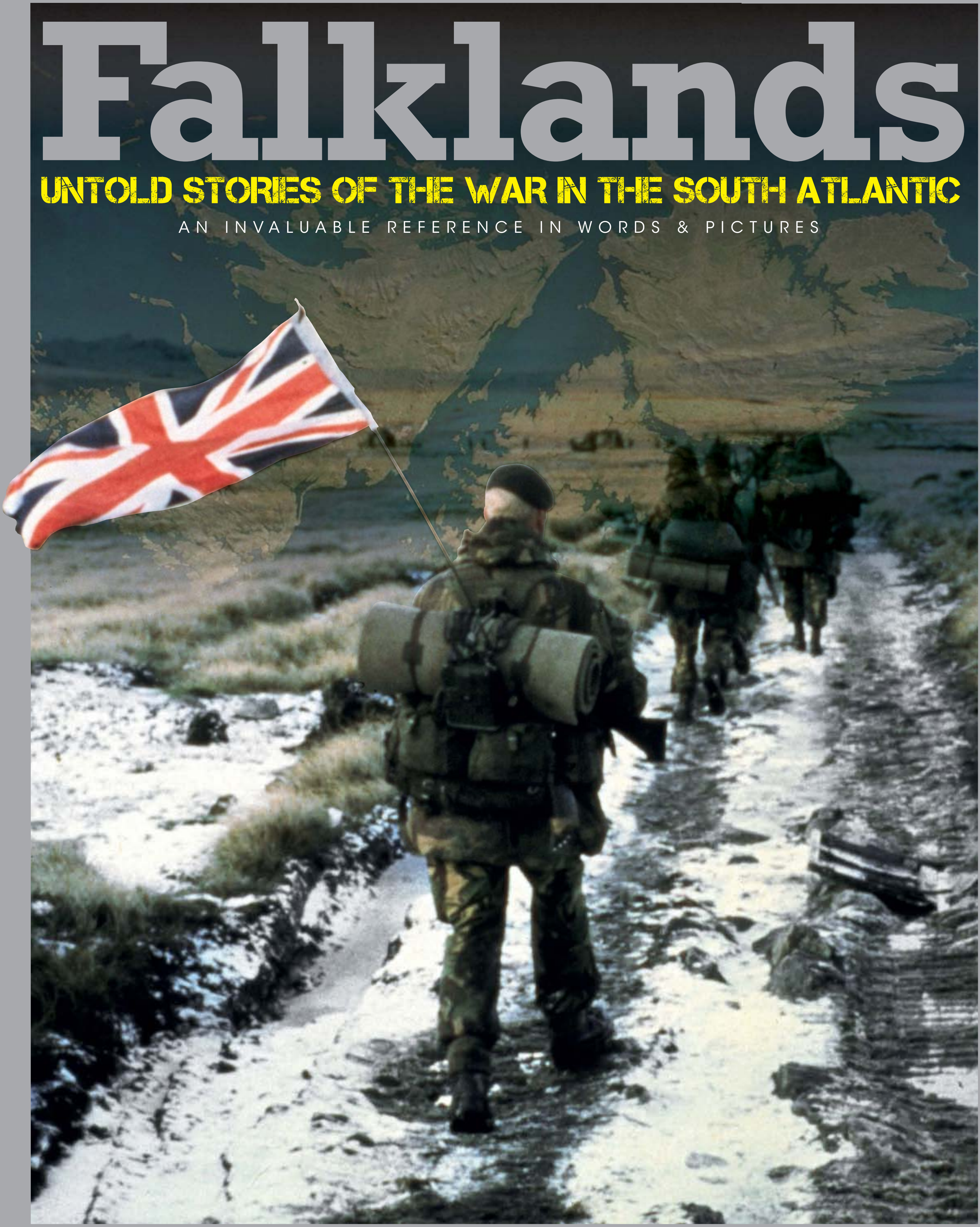

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Falklands30

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UNTOLD STORIES OF THE FALKLANDS WAR

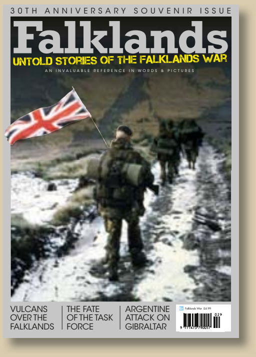
It was the final push on Stanley. In the foreground of the photograph, sheltering in a dug-out, were two British soldiers. Ahead of them were the Argentine positions. This image was on the front page of one of the newspapers in June 1982. It is my earliest memory of a headline on a national daily.

I can still recall my father trying to explain to me the story of the war against people who had invaded British territory. However, the picture of British servicemen and women who had travelled thousands of miles to defend the freedom of others made a profound impression upon that young child.

Thirty years later, the events and images of the Falklands War remain highly relevant – not least for those who were directly affected. Indeed, it is to those men and women, military and civilian, and particularly those who made the ultimate sacrifice, that this Falklands 30th anniversary souvenir issue is dedicated.

Equally, the thirtieth anniversary of the invasion of the Falklands, and the possibility of significant oil deposits within its waters, has reignited the subject of the Islands' sovereignty. The Falkland Islands are headline news once more and, thirty years on, photographs of British troops again adorn our national newspapers.

Martin Mace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FRONT COVER: A column of 45 Royal Marine Commandoes march along the Moody Brook track towards towards Port Stanley. Twenty-four-year-old Royal Marine Peter Robinson, carrying the Union Jack flag on his backpack as identification, brings up the rear. This photograph, taken in black and white and colour by Petty Officer Peter Holdgate, a Commando Forces Photographer working as part of the Commando Forces News Team, became one of the iconic images of the Falklands Conflict. The photograph itself was entirely spontaneous and not staged.
(Imperial War Museum, FKD2028)

Falklands30

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From your friends
The Pilgrims
SAMA 82
FROM THE SEA FREEDOM

CHRONOLOGY OF

MARCH

1 Against a backdrop of increasing tension in the South Atlantic – it had been as early as 9 January 1982, that the British Ambassador to Argentina lodged a formal protest against the unauthorised landings on South Georgia by Argentine scrap-metal merchants on 20 December 1981 – the British and Argentine deputy foreign ministers issued a joint communiqué which praised the "cordial and positive spirit" of sovereignty discussions, relating to the Falkland Islands, that had been held in New York.

2 The Argentine Foreign Minister rejected the announcement made the previous day and stated that Argentina reserved the right to "employ other means" if the UK Government continued to refuse to cede sovereignty.

3 In the House of Commons, Julian Amery MP questioned if "all necessary steps are in hand to ensure the protection of the islands against unexpected attack".

6 A Hercules aircraft operated by the Argentine military airline LADE, supposedly undertaking a mail run to an Antarctic base, landed at Stanley Airport, the crew claiming that the 'plane had a fuel leak. Whilst the Hercules was "stranded" a group of senior Argentine officers who had been on board was taken on a tour of Stanley and its environs by the local LADE representative.

19 Scrap metal workmen, accompanied by a military presence, landed on South Georgia Island, hoisting the Argentine flag.

26 The decision to invade the Falkland Islands was made by the Argentine Junta. Operation *Rosario* was scheduled for either 25 May or 9 July – both days of important national celebrations. However, due to mounting domestic pressures, the date of the invasion is moved forward.

28 It was reported that five Argentine warships had been sighted near South Georgia.
Argentina restated its claim to the Falkland Islands and Dependencies, telling Britain that there would be no negotiations over South Georgia. At the same time, all leave for Argentine military and diplomatic personnel was cancelled. Overflights of Stanley began.

30 Lord Carrington, the Foreign Secretary, stated that a diplomatic solution to the events in the South Atlantic was being pursued by the British government.

31 Against a backdrop of violent anti-government riots across Argentina, a British intelligence source warned that the Argentine fleet was at sea heading towards the Falkland Islands. In the UK, the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Henry Leach, advised a crisis meeting headed by Mrs Thatcher that Britain could and should send a task force if the Islands were invaded.

APRIL

1 The UN Security Council, meeting at the request of the United Kingdom, called for restraint and avoidance of force. Reagan warned the Argentine leader, General Galtieri, not to take military action.
During the afternoon, Governor Rex Hunt was informed that the UK now believed that a full invasion was being planned by Argentina; he duly summoned an immediate meeting of government heads of department. At 19.15 hours local time, Governor Hunt gave a radio broadcast in which he warned islanders of the impending invasion. At the same time he mobilised the Royal Marines and Falkland Islands Defence Force.
In keeping with his comments the previous day, Admiral Leach ordered ships on exercise in the Mediterranean to prepare to sail south.

MAIN PICTURE: **A view of the general area of Bas Jetty, Grytviken, as it is today. The *Santa Fé*, as it appears in the picture on the right, would have settled just beyond the two wrecked whalers in the foreground. When news of the success of the actions at South Georgia was announced on the BBC, the United States reacted with "grave concern", adding that it would remain committed to a diplomatic solution to the crisis. The Argentine government was not so reserved. The Argentine Foreign Minister, Costa Mendez, warned that the British action would have "very grave consequences for peace". At the time Mendez had arrived in New York on his way to talks with the US Secretary of State, Alexander Haig. He told reporters that Argentina was now technically in a state of war with the United Kingdom.** (With the kind permission of Hannes Grobe)

THE CONFLICT

2 Just minutes after midnight Argentina put Operation *Rosario* into action by bringing ships into position off the islands. At 03.25 hours Governor Hunt declared a State of Emergency. Argentine Special Forces landed at Mullet Creek (south of Stanley) at 04.30 hours, more troops landed at York Bay at 05.30, and by 06.00 were engaged in fighting with the Royal Marines – three Argentines were killed. The main Argentine landing force began disembarking at Stanley at 08.00, by which time the airstrip had been cleared and the 25th Regiment had started to be flown in. Governor Hunt ordered the surrender at 09.15 hours – by now the whole town, other than Government House, was under Argentine control. Lord Carrington told Parliament that "Stanley is now occupied by Argentine military forces". Brigadier General Mario Menendez was appointed governor of Islas Malvinas and Stanley was renamed Puerto Argentino. Royal Marines on South Georgia attacked the Argentine forces at 12.30 hours, but after inflicting heavy damage surrendered to a far superior force two hours later.

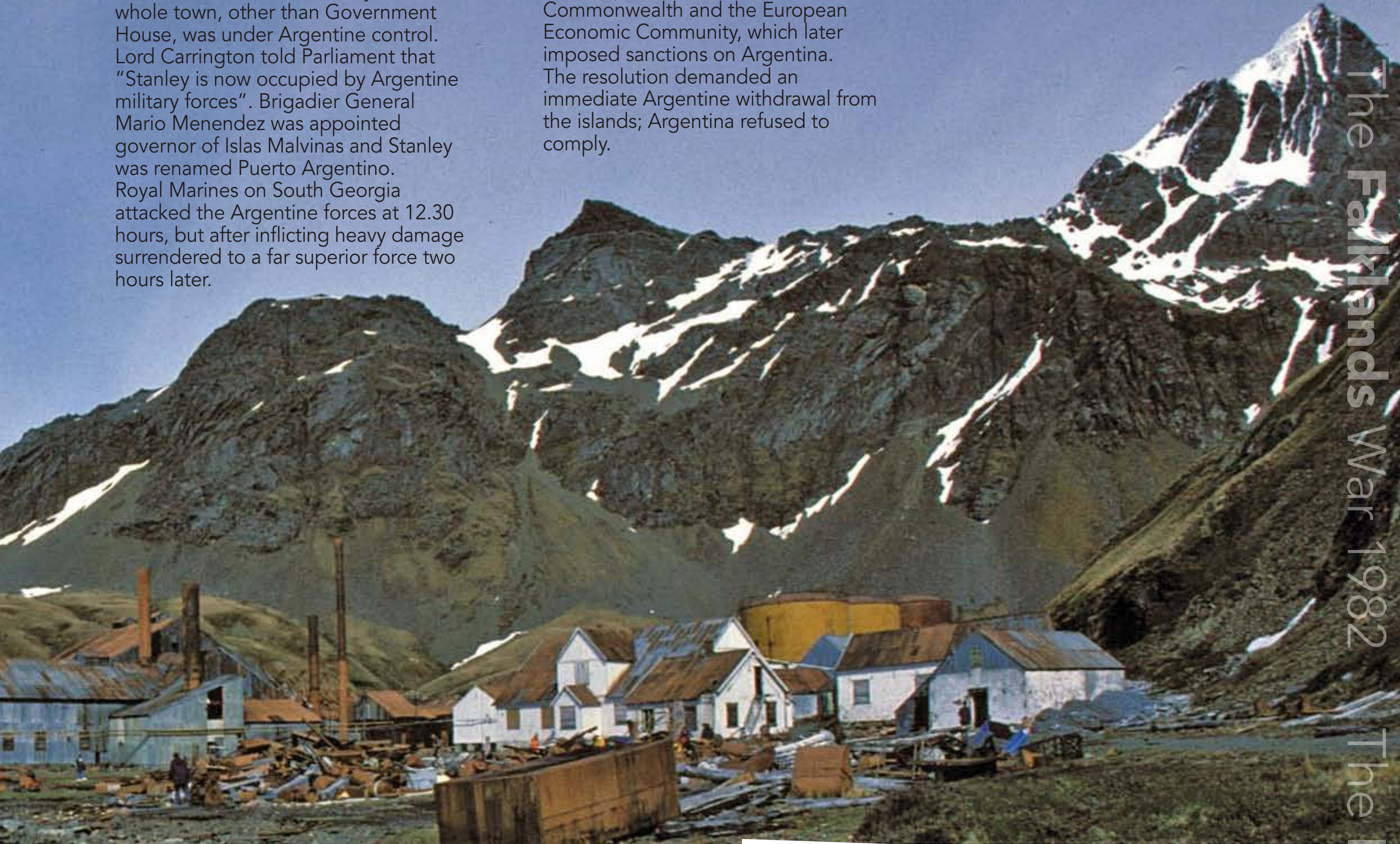
For the first time since the Suez Crisis, MPs were recalled for a special Saturday sitting of the House of Commons. At an emergencycabinet meeting approval was given for the despatch of a task force to the South Atlantic.

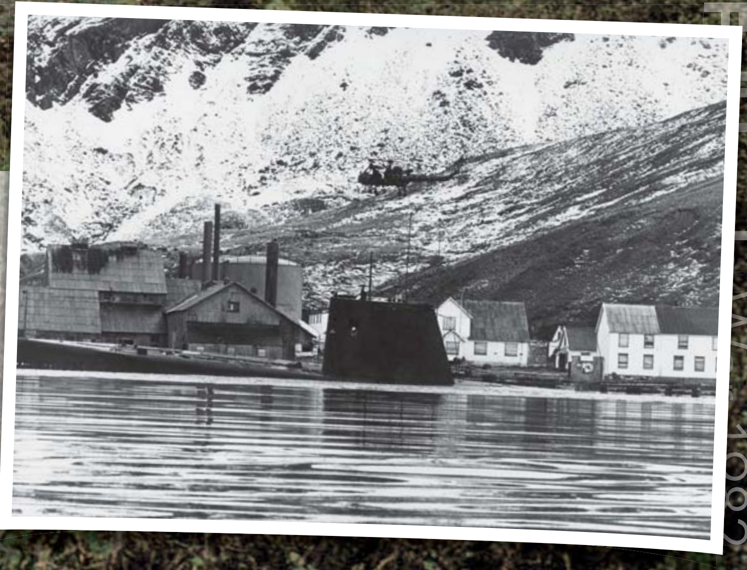
3 Argentina reinforced its troops on South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands. The first RAF transport aircraft were deployed to Ascension Island. The UN Security Council passed Resolution 502 by ten votes to one. Panama voted against and there were four abstentions – China, Poland, Spain, and the Soviet Union. The resolution was supported by members of the Commonwealth and the European Economic Community, which later imposed sanctions on Argentina. The resolution demanded an immediate Argentine withdrawal from the islands; Argentina refused to comply.

Fifty-two school children were evacuated from Stanley in a convoy of eighteen Land Rovers.

4 The Churchill-class nuclear-powered fleet submarine HMS *Conqueror* sailed from Faslane. Argentine troops occupied the settlements at Goose Green and Darwin. Lighthouse keeper and radio ham Reg Silvey made radio contact with the UK and continued making clandestine broadcasts throughout the occupation.

5 In company with other vessels, HMS *Invincible* and HMS *Hermes* departed from Portsmouth. Lord Carrington resigned and was replaced as Foreign Secretary by Francis Pym.





RIGHT: The fatally-damaged ARA *Santa Fé* settles by the stern at Bas Jetty, Grytviken, South Georgia, following the attacks on 25 April 1982. Overhead hovers one of the Westland Wasps from HMS *Endurance*. Note the hole in the submarine's conning-tower – caused by one of the many AS12 missiles. The AS12 was an air-to-ground wire-guided missile manufactured by Aérospatiale and used by both sides during the Falklands War. As in Operation *Paraquet,* the AS12 was most commonly used as an anti-shipping missile. (Courtesy of the Fleet Air Arm Museum)

DANGER
XS527

6 The British Government set up a War Cabinet to provide a day-to-day political oversight of the campaign. Until it was dissolved on 12 August, the War Cabinet met at least daily.

7 The P&O liner SS *Canberra* was requisitioned at Southampton upon her return from a world cruise.

8 The US Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, began his “shuttle mediation” between the UK and Argentina. The United States initially tried to negotiate an end to the conflict. However, when Argentina refused the US peace moves, Haig announced that the United States would prohibit arms sales to Argentina and provide material support for British operations. Both Houses of the US Congress passed resolutions supporting the US action in siding with the UK.

9 After her hasty conversion to a troopship, SS *Canberra* sailed from Southampton with 3 Para, 40, 42 and 45 Royal Marine Commandos on board.

10 The European Economic Community's economic sanctions against Argentina came into effect, though both Ireland and Italy had vetoed the plans.

11 The submarines HMS *Spartan* and HMS *Splendid* took station off of the Falkland Islands.

12 Britain announced the creation of a 200-mile Exclusion Zone around the Falkland Islands. The destroyer HMS *Antrim* and the frigate HMS *Plymouth* with 'M' Company, 42 Commando, sailed from Ascension to recapture South Georgia.

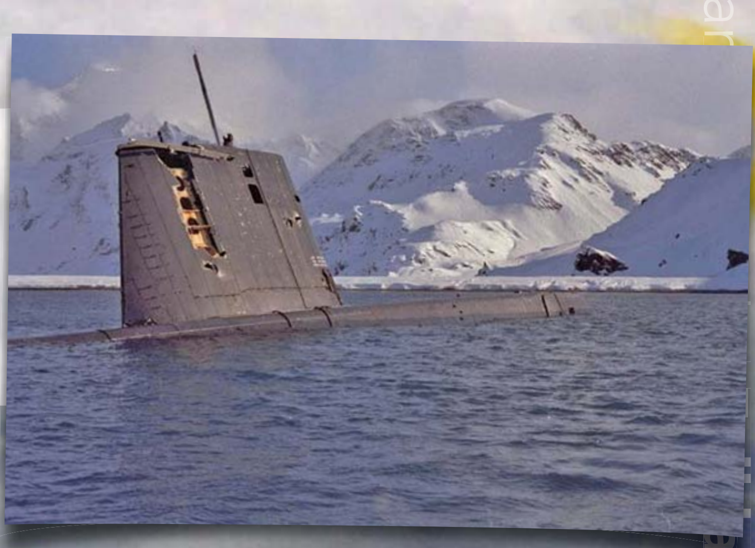
13 The Rothesay-class frigate HMS *Falmouth* was taken off the sales list to be re-commissioned.

14 The South Georgia Task Force rendezvoused with HMS *Endurance* which was already in the vicinity.

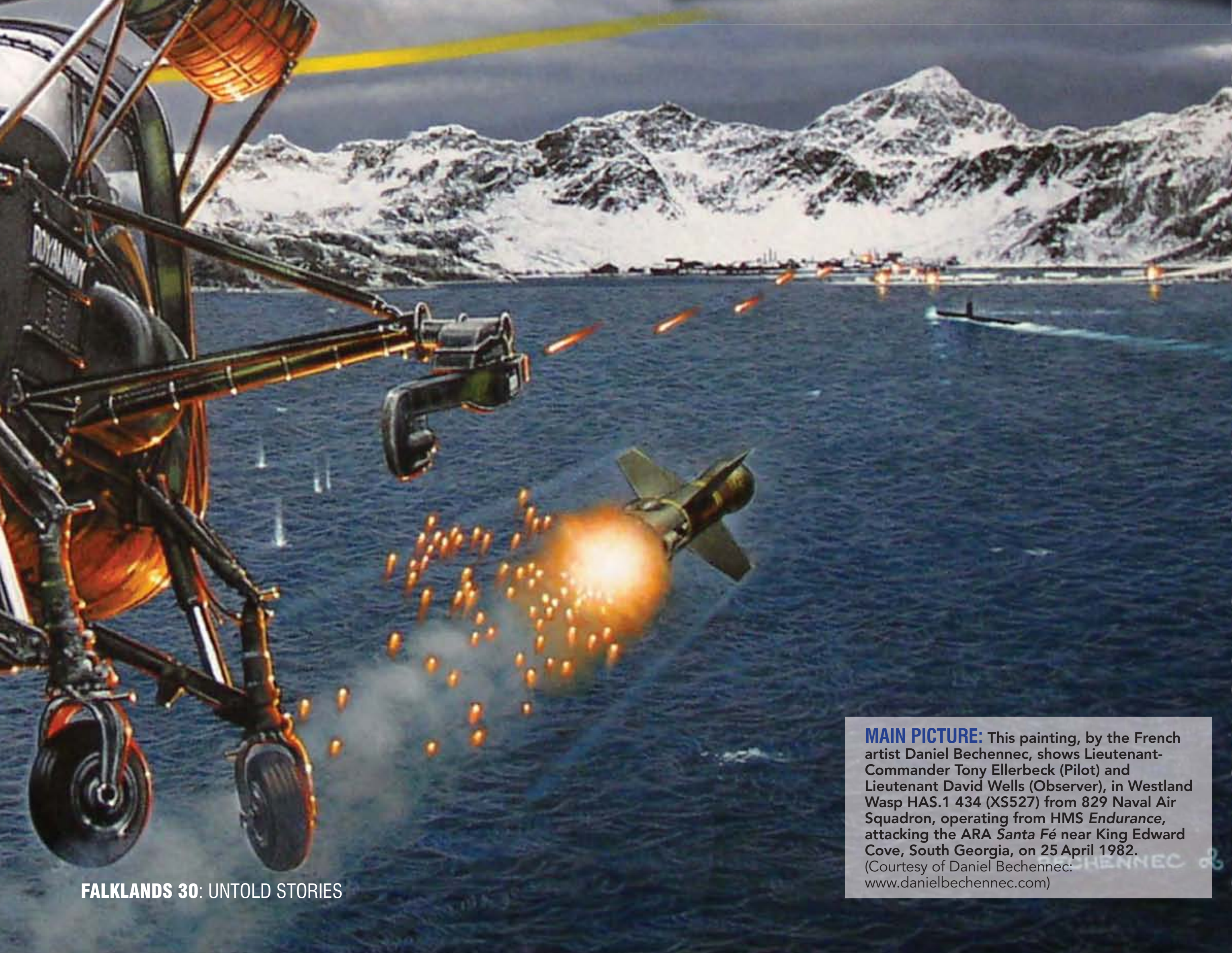
The Prime Minister made a speech in the House of Commons. It ended with these words: "The eyes of the world are now focused on the Falkland Islands. Others are watching anxiously to see whether brute force or the rule of law will triumph. Wherever naked aggression occurs it must be overcome. The cost now, however high, must be set against the cost we would one day have to pay if this principle went by default. That is why, through diplomatic, economic and, if necessary, through military means, we shall persevere until freedom and democracy are restored to the people of the Falkland Islands.

An intelligence assessment suggested that the strength of the Argentine forces in the Falklands was some 7,000 men.

An Argentine fleet sailed from Puerto Belgrano, the Argentine Navy's largest naval base.



RIGHT: On 27 April 1982, two days after the Fleet Air Arm attack, it was decided to move the *Santa Fé* to a new, temporary berth. The move was to be undertaken with the assistance of some of the original Argentine crew. Unfortunately, less than 100 yards from the jetty, difficulties were suddenly encountered and the submarine lurched to port. Subofficial (Chief Petty Officer) Primero Felix Artuso acted suddenly and decisively to try and correct the problem. Unfortunately, partly because of the language barrier and partly because of confusing instructions, Artuso's guard mistakenly thought the Argentine was trying to sabotage the vessel. The Royal Marine opened fire; Artuso died instantly. The only fatality in the operation against the *Santa Fé*, Artuso was buried two days later, with full military honours, in Whaler's Cemetery, Grytviken. Worthless as a war prize because she was non-standard, too expensive to repair, and obsolete, *Santa Fé* was eventually raised and scuttled in deep water. (Courtesy of Eddie Munday)



MAIN PICTURE: This painting, by the French artist Daniel Bechennec, shows Lieutenant-Commander Tony Ellerbeck (Pilot) and Lieutenant David Wells (Observer), in Westland Wasp HAS.1 434 (XS527) from 829 Naval Air Squadron, operating from HMS *Endurance*, attacking the ARA *Santa Fé* near King Edward Cove, South Georgia, on 25 April 1982. (Courtesy of Daniel Bechennec: www.danielbechennec.com)

15 A Royal Navy destroyer group took up a holding position in the mid-Atlantic.

16 Ascension Island's Wideawake Airfield was reputedly the busiest airport in the world on this day.
Work to convert the Cunard container ship *Atlantic Conveyor* began at Devonport. At the same time, the RFA *Tidepool*, a Tide-class replenishment oiler which was on passage for delivery to the Chilean Navy, was recalled to the UK.

17 Admiral Sir John Fieldhouse chaired a conference at Ascension Island which set out detailed plans for the retaking of the islands by force.

18 The main Carrier Group left Ascension Island waters and headed south. The vessels included HMS *Hermes*, HMS *Broadsword*, HMS *Glamorgan*, HMS *Yarmouth*, HMS *Alacrity*, RFA*Olmeda*, and RFA *Resource*. HMS *Invincible* was delayed leaving Ascension, awaiting urgently-required stores, but sailed later in the day and caught up with the main group with ease.

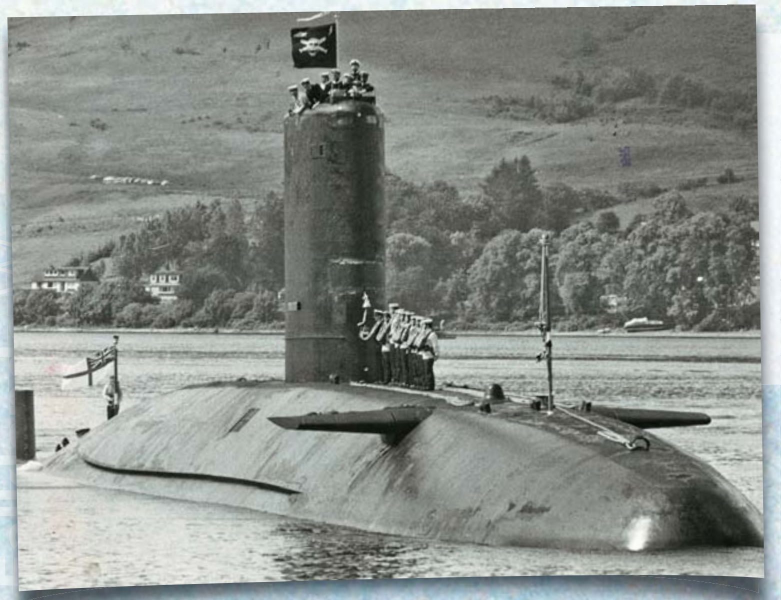
19 Argentina rejected Secretary of State Haig's plan unless Britain agreed to transfer sovereignty of the Falklands by 31 December 1982 and allow Argentine nationals to settle in the islands.
Six RAF Victor tanker aircraft of 55 and 57 Squadrons landed at Ascension having flown from RAF Marham.

20 The War Cabinet ordered the recapture of the Falkland Islands. The first target was South Georgia, under the name of Operation *Paraquat*.
The retaking of the island was led by the Antrim group consisting of HMS *Antrim*, HMS *Plymouth*, HMS *Endurance*, and RFA *Tidespring*.
To the south of this group, by a day's sailing, the submarine HMS *Conqueror* was also in the waters around South Georgia.

21 SAS personnel were inserted, and then extracted, from the Fortuna Glacier on South Georgia.

22 The UK advised all British nationals to leave Argentina.
Whilst the British task force arrived in the waters off the Falklands, General Galtieri paid a visit to the islands.

23 Twenty-six year old Petty Officer Aircrewman Kevin Stuart Casey became the first British fatality of the conflict when his 846 Naval Air Squadron Sea King HC.4 crashed into the sea south of Ascension Island whilst operating from HMS *Hermes*.
At the time the aircraft, call sign Victor Papa, was undertaking night time vertical replenishment duties. The RAF pilot, Squadron Leader Bob Grundy, was rescued, but Petty Officer Aircrewman Casey, who was in the Sea King's main cabin at the time, was never found.



LEFT: HMS *Conqueror* pictured returning to her base at Faslane on 3 July 1982. Note the flying of the "Jolly Roger". This flag is in the collection of the Royal Navy Submarine Museum, as is, amongst other related objects, *Conqueror*'s periscope through which *Belgrano* and her escorts were first sighted in May 1982. (Courtesy of Mark Thomas)

MAIN PICTURE: Taken by a crewman from his life-raft, ARA *Belgrano* is pictured gradually sinking into the cold waters of the South Atlantic. *General Belgrano* had originally been built as USS *Phoenix*, a Brooklyn-class light cruiser, having been launched in New Jersey in March 1938. She served right through the Second World War, surviving the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. She is the only ship ever to have been sunk by a nuclear-powered submarine as a hostile act. (US Department of Defense)

Britain warned Argentina that any military or civilian ship or aircraft representing a threat to the Task Force would be destroyed.

RAF pilots undertook familiarization training with French Mirage and aircraft, providing valuable experience of some of the types operated by Argentina. The Mirages operated from RAF Coningsby to retain some anonymity, whilst the flew to a rendezvous point off the south-east coast.

24 A peace plan presented by the US Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, was debated by the British government.

Writing in her memoirs, Margaret Thatcher noted: "I can only describe the document which he brought back as conditional surrender." Consequently, she believed that this had been "one of the most crucial days in the Falklands story". After much discussion, during which some in the War Cabinet revealed that they were in favour of accepting the US plan, the decision was taken to instruct the Americans to present the document to the Argentine government first, the belief being that it would be rejected by the Junta.

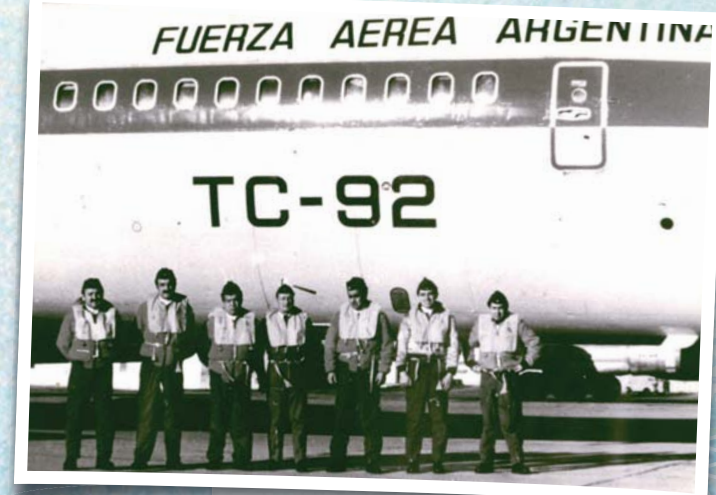
25 Having resupplied the Argentine garrison in South Georgia, the Argentine submarine ARA *Sante Fé* was spotted on the surface by a Westland Wessex HAS Mk.3 helicopter operating from HMS *Antrim*. The helicopter attacked the Argentine submarine with depth charges. HMS *Plymouth* launched a Westland Wasp HAS Mk.I helicopter; HMS *Brilliant* a Westland Lynx HAS Mk.2.

The latter dropped a torpedo, whilst the Wessex also fired on the *Santa Fé* with its GPMG. The Wasp from *Plymouth*, accompanied by two other Wasps launched from HMS *Endurance*, launched missiles at the submarine, scoring hits. *Santa Fé* was damaged badly enough to prevent her from diving. The crew abandoned the submarine at the jetty at King Edward Point on South Georgia.

Following this, at 16.00 hours GMT, the operation to recapture South Georgia was launched by a small force of Royal Marines and SAS personnel who landed on the island and advanced towards Grytviken.

Two hours later the commander of the Argentine forces in Grytviken surrendered, having offered only limited resistance. The subsequent victory was signalled to London by the commanding officer with a brief but dramatic message: "Be pleased to inform Her Majesty that the White Ensign flies alongside the Union Jack in South Georgia. God Save the Queen."

Mrs Thatcher announced the news to journalists gathered in Downing



ABOVE: On 22 May 1982, an Argentine Air Force Boeing 707 on a reconnaissance mission narrowly avoided being hit by a Sea Dart missile fired by HMS *Coventry* when a flash-door failed, preventing the missile loading on the launcher. A second 707, TC-92 of *Grupo 1, De Transporte Aereo Escuadron II*, approached the warships later in the morning. RFA *Tidespring* had reported the aircraft's presence and HMS *Cardiff* dropped back from the group. When the 707 came within range, HMS *Cardiff* fired a pair of Sea Darts at 11:40 hours (local time) at maximum range; the first fell short, whilst the second missed due to evasive manoeuvres by the aircraft's crew (seen here in front of their aircraft). One missile was seen to burst close to the target which dropped below radar level and returned to El Palomar.

Street with the remark: "Just rejoice at that news and congratulate our forces and the marines."

Meanwhile, the Argentine Foreign Minister, Costa Mendez, warned that the British action would have "very grave consequences for peace". As he arrived in New York on his way to talks with Alexander Haig, he told reporters that Argentina was now technically in a state of war with Britain.

26 Formal surrender of Argentine personnel on South Georgia.

The *Santa Fé* was moved from King Edward Point Jetty to the whaling station. A "Defence Area" is also declared around the British fleet.

The cruiser ARA *General Belgrano* sailed from Ushuaia in Tierra del Fuego accompanied by two destroyers, the ARA *Piedra Buena* and ARA *Bouchard*. All three ex-US Navy warships operated as Task Group 79.3.

Mrs Thatcher said that time for diplomacy was running out. President Ronald Reagan declared US support for Britain and economic sanctions against Argentina.

27 The men of 2 Para sailed from Hull on the MV *Norland*, a requisitioned flat- bottomed North Sea ferry. As the *Norland* battled through the storms in the Southern Ocean, one Para was left to wonder "whose side the Navy are on for putting us on this ship".

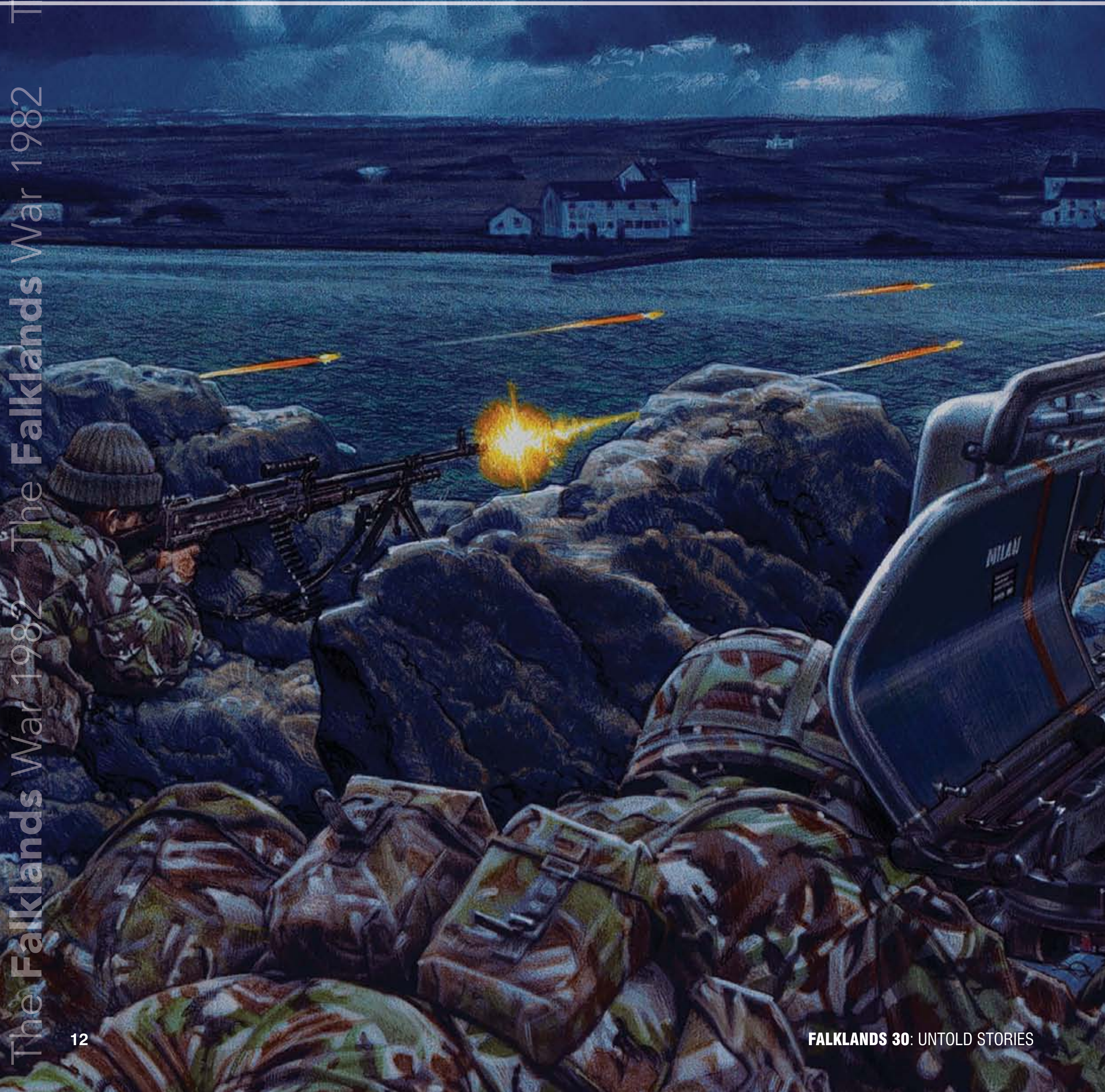
The Chiefs of Staff presented the plans for Operation *Sutton*, the intended British landings on the shores of San Carlos Water, at Ajax Bay, and Port San Carlos on East Falkland, to the War Cabinet. The plan marked the first stage of the repossession of the Falkland Islands.

Fourteen Stanley residents regarded by the Argentines as potential troublemakers are sent to Fox Bay East on West Falkland.

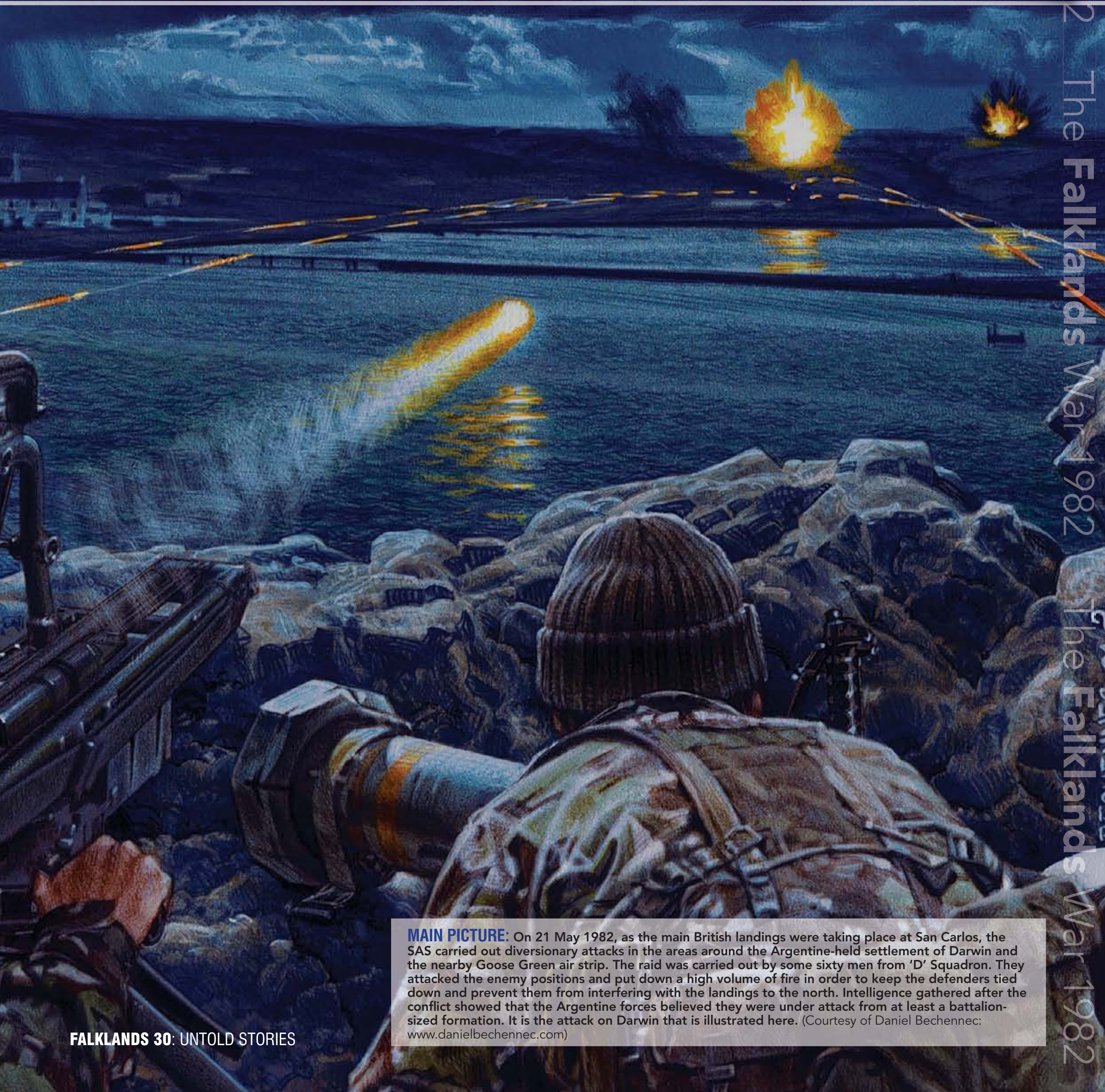
28 The Organisation of American States (whose members are the thirty-five independent states of the American continent) supported Argentina's sovereignty claim but called for peaceful negotiations.

In the seas around South Georgia, the *Antrim Group*, fresh from its involvement in the retaking of the islands, departed to join up with the main body of the Task Force leaving HMS *Endurance* on patrol.

29 The Argentine Fleet which had been at sea continuously since 17 April, and designated Task Force 79, split into two groups to cover the



RIGHT: Whilst the British landings were taking place at San Carlos, the ships of the Task Force operated under the watchful gaze of a RAF Nimrod MR2P aircraft – an example of which is seen here. Starting in 1975, thirty-five Nimrods were upgraded to MR2 standard, being re-delivered from August 1979. The upgrade included extensive modernisation of the Nimrod's electronic suite. Provision for in-flight refuelling was introduced during the Falklands War, as the MR2P variant, as well as hard points to allow the Nimrod to carry the AIM-9 Sidewinder missile for use against Argentine Air Force Boeing 707s being used for maritime patrol/surveillance duties shadowing the British Task Force. Eventually all MR2s gained refuelling probes and the "P" designation was dropped. The Nimrod operating on 21 May was tasked to monitor and search the Argentine coast for signs of naval activity. The aircraft would be airborne for a total of eighteen hours and fifty-one minutes and cover 8,453 miles – setting what was, at the time, a new record for the longest operational reconnaissance mission ever undertaken. (Courtesy of Adrian Pingstone)



MAIN PICTURE: On 21 May 1982, as the main British landings were taking place at San Carlos, the SAS carried out diversionary attacks in the areas around the Argentine-held settlement of Darwin and the nearby Goose Green air strip. The raid was carried out by some sixty men from 'D' Squadron. They attacked the enemy positions and put down a high volume of fire in order to keep the defenders tied down and prevent them from interfering with the landings to the north. Intelligence gathered after the conflict showed that the Argentine forces believed they were under attack from at least a battalion-sized formation. It is the attack on Darwin that is illustrated here. (Courtesy of Daniel Bechennec: www.danielbechennec.com)

Falklands. The first group comprising the carrier 25 *de Mayo*, two guided missile destroyers, the *Hercules* and *Santisima Trinidad*, and four smaller destroyers and frigates, took up a position just outside of the Maritime Exclusion Zone to the north-west of the islands. The second, comprising the *General Belgrano* and two destroyers, took up a similar position to the south-west of the islands.

RAF Vulcans arrived at Ascension Island.

30 The maritime exclusion zone was declared a Total Exclusion Zone, commonly referred to as the TEZ, which was applicable to all ships and aircraft supporting the Argentine occupation of the islands.

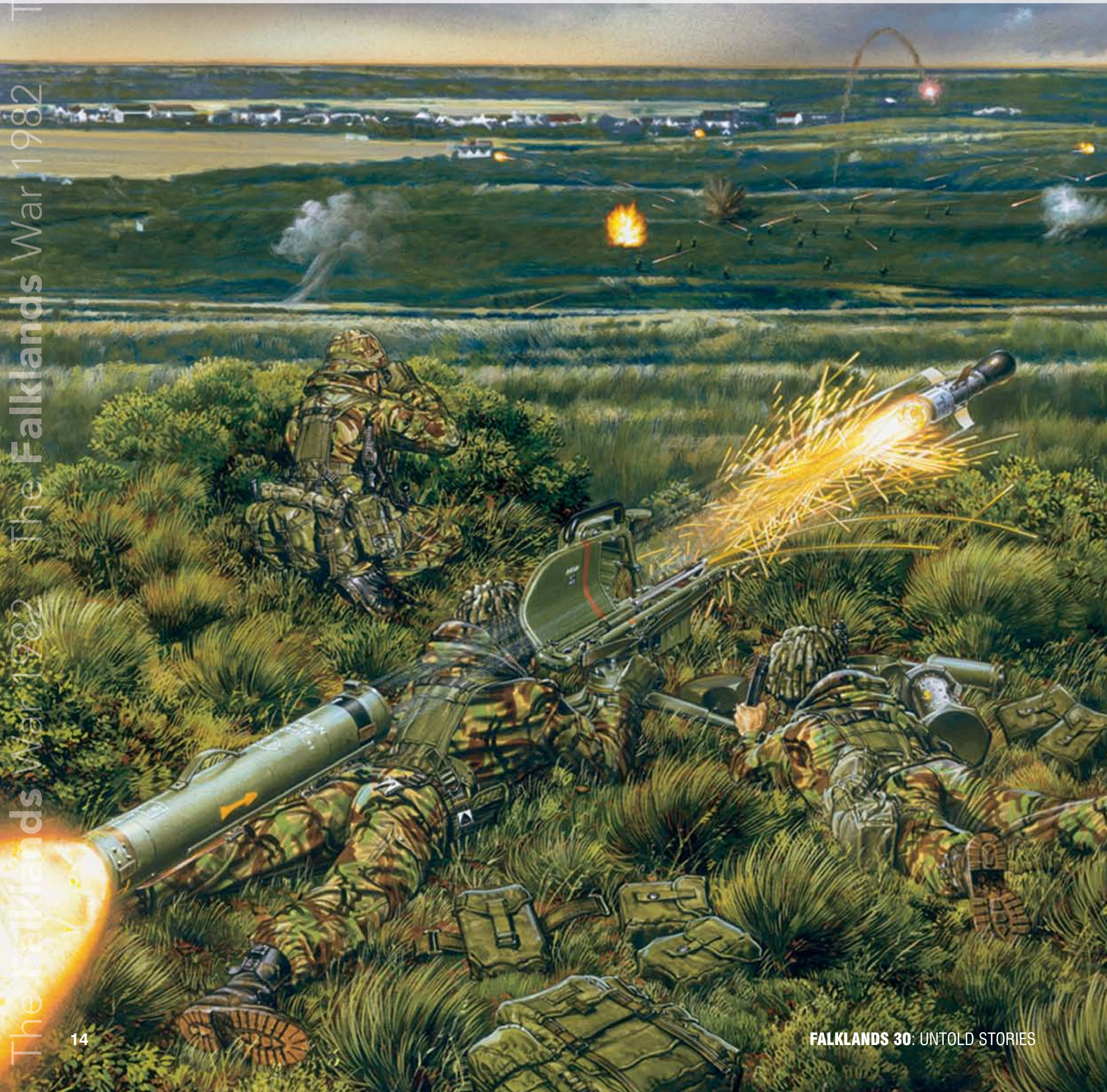
Ronald Reagan terminated Haig's peace mission, declared US support for Britain, imposed economic sanctions on Argentina, and offered Britain material and other aid.

MAY

1 The Task Force entered the Total Exclusion Zone and HMS *Invincible* launched the first Sea Harrier Combat Air Patrol (CAP) of the conflict. HMS *Glamorgan*, HMS *Alacrity* and HMS *Arrow* headed for the Falklands, covered by the CAP, while HMS *Brilliant* and HMS *Yarmouth* headed to the north-west of the Carrier group on anti-submarine patrol. By mid-afternoon, the *Glamorgan* group had come within gun range of Stanley airport, at which point the warships began a bombardment of the airfield. An attack by three Argentine Mirages was then made, and both *Glamorgan* and *Alacrity* were nearly hit by 1,000lb parachute-retarded bombs; strafing caused some minor damage to *Glamorgan* and *Arrow*. The bombardment of Stanley airfield continued until 01:35 hours, covering the landing of British Special Forces reconnaissance teams at Stanley.

The RAF launched the first of the *Black Buck* missions, during which a Vulcan bomber attacked the runway at Stanley. The raid comprised eleven Victor tankers and two RAF Vulcan bombers.

The day also saw the first air attacks by Harriers on Argentine positions on the Falklands, more specifically at Stanley airport and Goose Green. Three Argentine aircraft were shot down. BBC Correspondent Brian



Hanrahan made possibly the most famous quote of the whole conflict whilst reporting this attack. On the safe return of all the aircraft involved, he said: "I counted them all out and I counted them all back again."

Some 114 inhabitants of Goose Green were imprisoned in the settlement's Recreation Club for the next four weeks, whilst the fourteen Stanley residents previously sent to Fox Bay East are placed under house arrest.

2 *General Belgrano* was sunk thirty miles outside the exclusion zone by HMS *Conqueror* on the orders of the War Cabinet.

3 British forces sank one Argentine patrol boat and seriously damaged another. Argentine navy vessels were recalled to shallower waters off the Argentine coastline out of reach of the Royal Navy's submarines.

4 HMS *Sheffield* was hit by an Exocet missile and twenty men were killed. The first Harrier was lost over Goose Green. The aircraft, a Sea Harrier of 800 Naval Air Squadron operating from HMS *Hermes*, was shot down by radar-controlled, 35mm Oerlikon fire at 13.10 hours. Thirty-two-year-old Lieutenant Nick Taylor RN was killed.

5 Off the Argentine coast the Argentine Navy was committed to a full blown anti-submarine search after one of its S-2 Tracker aircraft reported a possible submarine contact. An intensive search revealed nothing, but the incident was enough for the *25 De Mayo* to disembark her air component and return to the Argentine naval base at Bahia Blanca where she remained for the duration of the conflict.

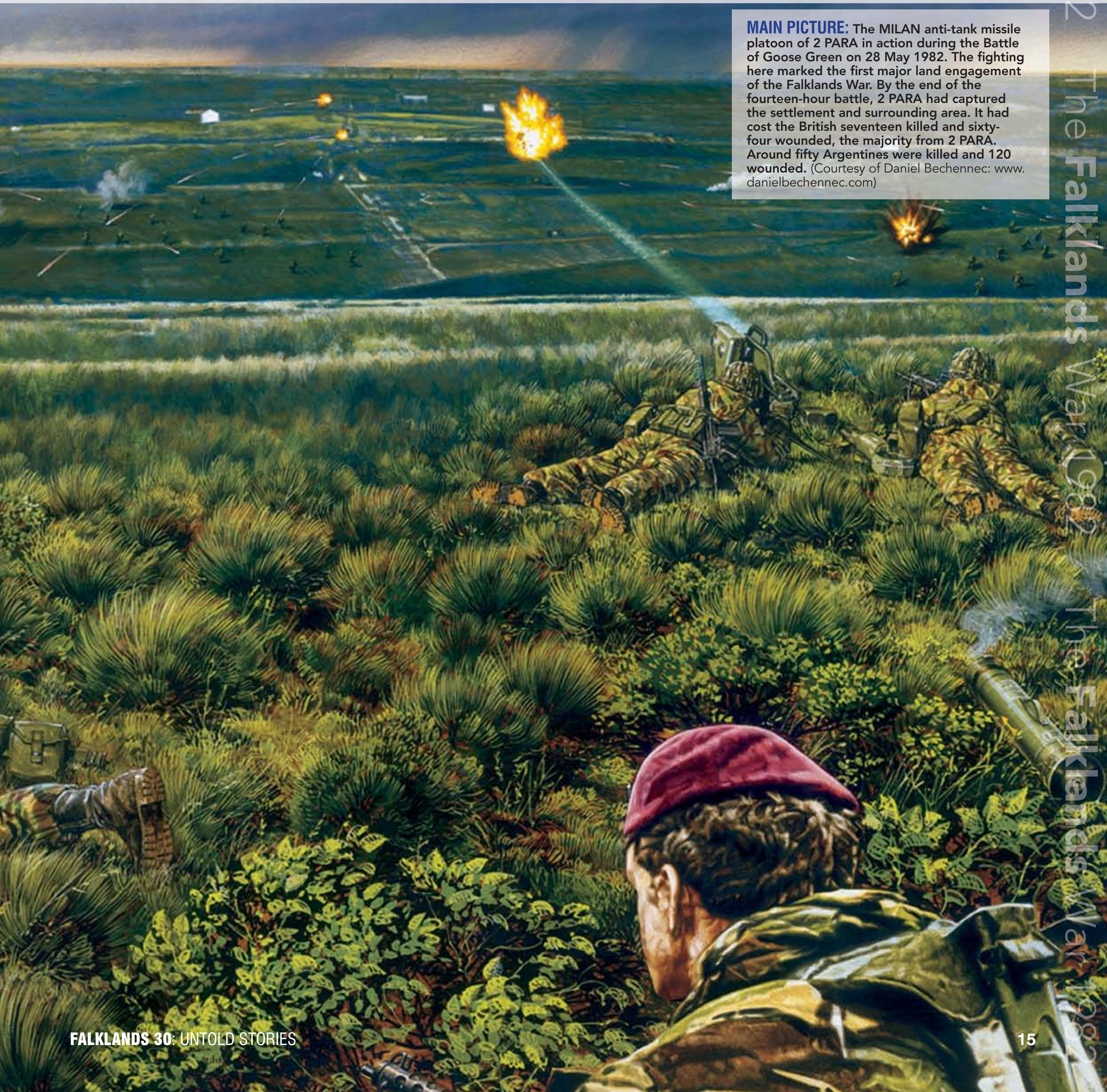
The UN entered peace negotiations while Britain extended its exclusion zone to include waters within twelve miles of Argentine mainland territory.

6 Two Sea Harriers of 801 Naval Air Squadron, flying from HMS *Invincible*, were lost in bad weather, presumably by collision, south-east of the Falklands. Lieutenant William Curtis and Lieutenant Commander John Eyton-Jones RN were both killed.

A convoy including SS *Canberra* headed south from Ascension.

7 The British Government warned Argentina that any warships and military aircraft over twelve miles from the Argentine coast would be regarded as hostile and would be dealt with accordingly.

In the late hours, the Amphibious Group sailed from Ascension Island in radio silence and without lights.



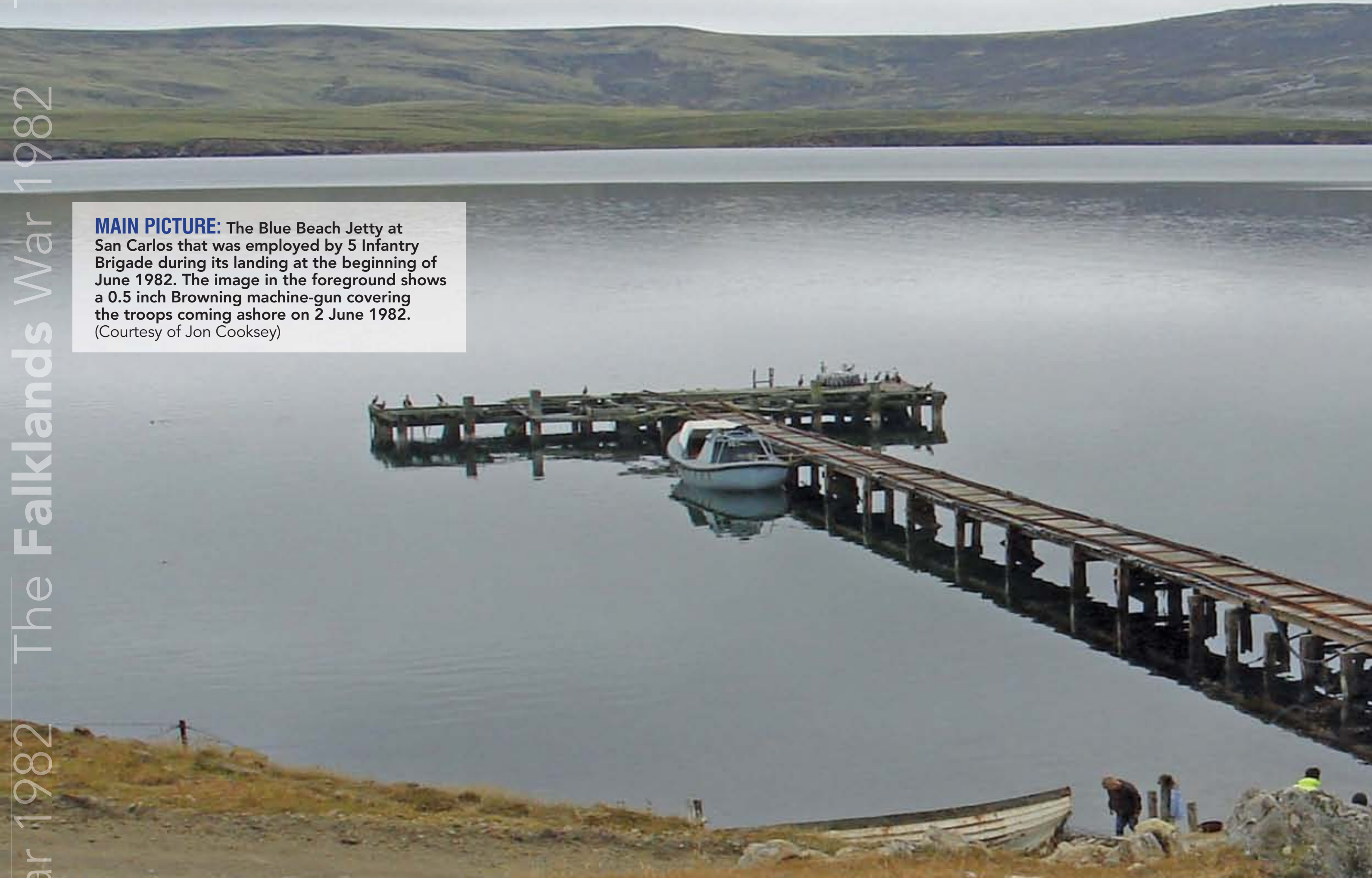
MAIN PICTURE: The MILAN anti-tank missile platoon of 2 PARA in action during the Battle of Goose Green on 28 May 1982. The fighting here marked the first major land engagement of the Falklands War. By the end of the fourteen-hour battle, 2 PARA had captured the settlement and surrounding area. It had cost the British seventeen killed and sixty-four wounded, the majority from 2 PARA. Around fifty Argentines were killed and 120 wounded. (Courtesy of Daniel Bechennec: www.danielbechennec.com)

8 The first long-range RAF air supply drops to the Task Force were completed whilst the ships were at sea in the South Atlantic.

9 Two Sea Harriers sank the trawler, *Narwal*, an Argentine fishing vessel being used as a spy ship and which had been shadowing the Task Force. HMS *Hermes* and HMS *Invincible* despatched three Sea Kings from which troops abseiled down to the trawler.
Once aboard they found one man had been killed and eleven more injured. One of the crew turned out to be an Argentine Naval officer and captured documents confirmed the vessel had been intelligence gathering. The prisoners were winched up to the Sea Kings. It became clear that one of the Sea Kings had insufficient fuel to make it back to the carriers and HMS *Glasgow* made her way to assist. The Sea King landed on the destroyer's deck with just three feet clearance between the tips of the rotor blades and the flight-deck hangar.
On the islands, Argentine positions faced heavy British bombardment from sea and air, especially around Stanley.

10 HMS *Glasgow* bombarded enemy positions at Moody Brook, whilst HMS *Sheffield* sank whilst under tow to safe anchorage in South Georgia.
Argentina declared the entire South Atlantic a war zone.

11 HMS *Alacrity* sank the 3,900-ton Argentine supply ship ARA *Isla de los Estados* in a surface action north of Swan Islands in Falklands Sound. *Alacrity* engaged *Isla de los Estados* with fifteen rounds from her 4.5-inch gun. The Argentine ship blew up after seven hits ignited her cargo of aviation fuel and munitions. Only two of the twenty-four men aboard survived; fifteen crewmembers and seven servicemen were killed or reported missing.
The Hospital Ship *Uganda* arrived off the Falklands and took up station in what became referred to as the "Red Cross Box". In fact, the box was a circle twenty nautical miles in diameter that was some forty-miles north of the Falklands. The box was formed when the British and Argentine governments agreed to establish an area on the high seas where both sides could station hospital ships without fear of attack by the other side. Ultimately, the British stationed four ships (HMS *Hydra*, HMS *Hecla*, HMS *Herald* and *Uganda*) within the box, whilst Argentina positioned three (*Almirante Irizar*, *Bahia Paraiso* and *Puerto Deseado*) within its perimeter.



MAIN PICTURE: The Blue Beach Jetty at San Carlos that was employed by 5 Infantry Brigade during its landing at the beginning of June 1982. The image in the foreground shows a 0.5 inch Browning machine-gun covering the troops coming ashore on 2 June 1982. (Courtesy of Jon Cooksey)

LEFT: Two views of the jetty in 2002. (Courtesy of Tim Lynch)

12 Britain's 5 Infantry Brigade, consisting of the Scots Guards, Welsh Guards and Gurkhas, sailed from Southampton on the requisitioned Cunard liner *QE2*.
HMS *Glasgow* was disabled by an Argentine bomb.
An 826 Naval Air Squadron Sea King HAS.5 suffered engine failure whilst operating from HMS *Hermes* and ditched in the sea. All on board were rescued.

13 Operation *Black Buck III*, involving Vulcans XM612 and XM607, was cancelled due to strong headwinds.

14 The SAS undertook a raid on Pebble Island which lies north of West Falkland. Eleven Argentine aircraft and a quantity of stores were destroyed on the ground.
Margaret Thatcher warned that a peaceful settlement to the conflict might no longer be possible.

15 Following several days of bad weather, 801 Squadron dropped 1,000lb bombs on Port Stanley airfield, Sapper Hill and a helicopter support base near Mount Kent. Meanwhile,800 Naval Air Squadron's Combat Air Patrol dropped six 1,000lb bombs on the airfield whilst the Carrier Battle Group operated to the east of the Falklands.
The Argentine Navy lost its last Neptune aircraft, bringing to an end its long-range air reconnaissance and shadowing capability.

16 An Argentine freighter, the *Rio Carcarana*, was spotted and attacked off Port King. The crew abandoned ship and made their way to Port Howard. The naval auxiliary *Bahia Buen Suceso*, moored near the civilian settlement at Fox Bay, was strafed by the Sea Harriers of 800 Naval Air Squadron. They encountered some resistance, anti-aircraft fire was quite heavy and one of the aircraft returned with a bullet hole in its tail.
Under the cover of darkness HMS *Glamorgan* was sent inshore to continue the naval bombardment. She fired 130 rounds at targets in Stanley, Darwin and Fitzroy.
Aerial reconnaissance photographs taken during the afternoon revealed another bomb crater on the runway at Stanley. This had been created by Argentine personnel who had begun to simulate bomb craters using bulldozers to build piles of mud which could be removed at night allowing aircraft to land.

17 A Sea King HAS.5 of 826 Naval Air Squadron, flying from HMS *Hermes*, hit the sea at 22.30 hours because of altimeter problems. All of the crew were rescued.
The EEC renewed sanctions against Argentina for another week: Italy and Ireland lifted them altogether.

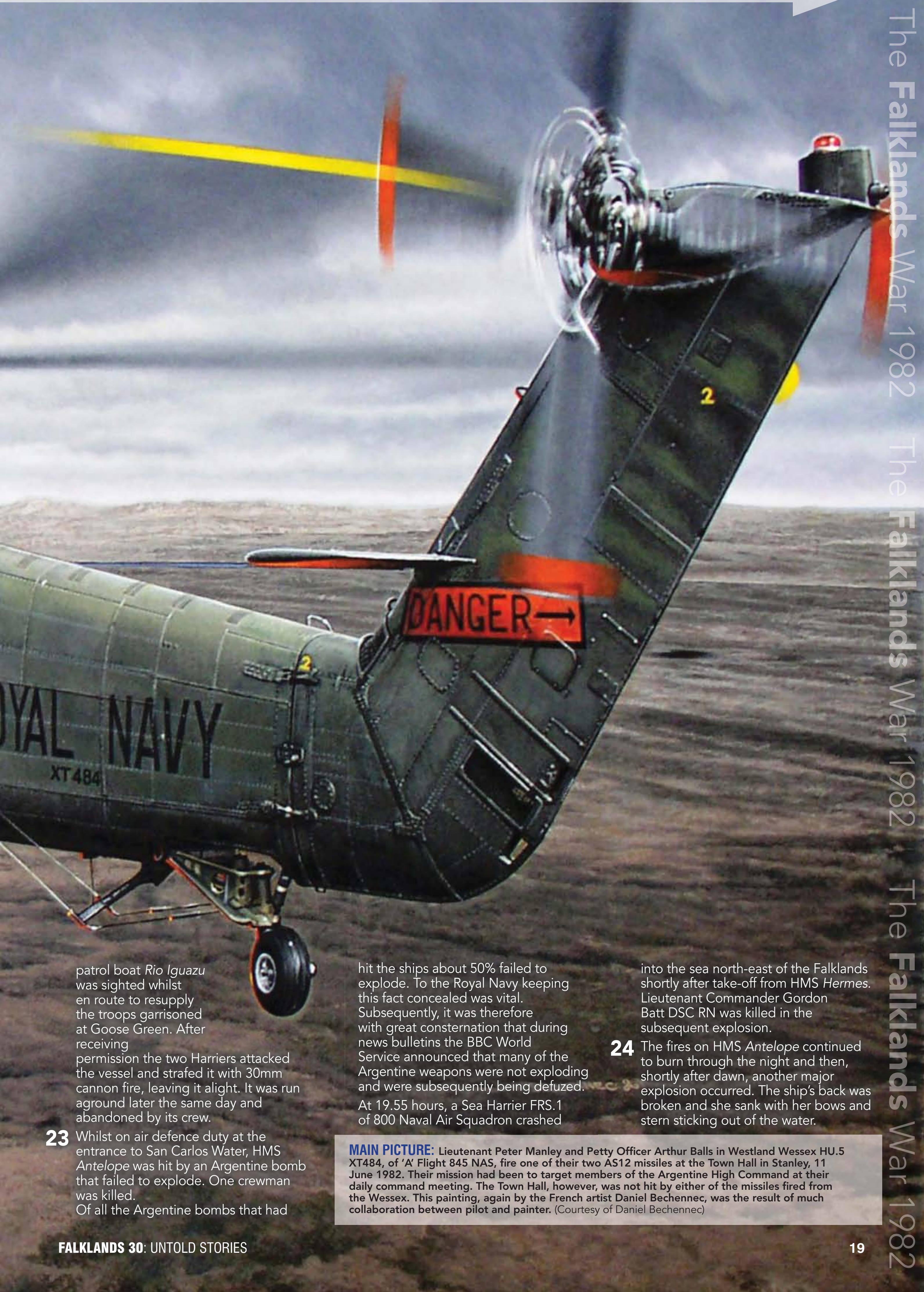
18 HMS *Invincible*'s first three Combat Air Patrol missions dropped six 1,000lb bombs on Stanley airfield.

19 A Sea King HC.4 of 846 Naval Air Squadron crashed into the sea north-east of the Falklands at 19.15 hours whilst cross-decking personnel. Despite HMS *Brilliant*'s prompt actions, of the thirty men on board, the helicopter's aircrewman, eighteen SAS personnel, a member of the Royal Signals, and the only RAF man killed in the war, were all lost. The two pilots were saved.
The War Cabinet gave approval for British forces to commence landings with the intention of retaking the islands.

20 The Amphibious Group turned to the west, leaving the Carrier Battle Group to continue to the south-west. The first offensive mission flown by the RAF from an aircraft carrier since October 1918 was launched from HMS *Hermes*.

21 The final act of retaking the Falklands began when the first British landings took place at San Carlos Bay. Under Operation *Sutton*, men from the Royal Marines and Paras were put ashore along with commando artillery and engineer units. A diversionary attack on Goose Green was carried out by some forty members of the Special Air Service.
HMS *Ardent* was lost; twenty-two men were killed. HMS *Argonaut* and HMS *Antrim* were both hit by Argentine bombs which failed to explode – two men were killed.
A Harrier GR.3 of 1 Squadron RAF was shot down over Port Howard, West Falkland, probably by Blowpipe SAM. The pilot, Flight Lieutenant Jeff Glover, ejected and, injured, was taken prisoner-of-war.

22 During the first Combat Air Patrol of the day, undertaken from HMS *Hermes*, the Argentine Coast Guard's



patrol boat *Rio Iguazu* was sighted whilst en route to resupply the troops garrisoned at Goose Green. After receiving permission the two Harriers attacked the vessel and strafed it with 30mm cannon fire, leaving it alight. It was run aground later the same day and abandoned by its crew.

23 Whilst on air defence duty at the entrance to San Carlos Water, HMS *Antelope* was hit by an Argentine bomb that failed to explode. One crewman was killed.

Of all the Argentine bombs that had hit the ships about 50% failed to explode. To the Royal Navy keeping this fact concealed was vital. Subsequently, it was therefore with great consternation that during news bulletins the BBC World Service announced that many of the Argentine weapons were not exploding and were subsequently being defuzed.

At 19.55 hours, a Sea Harrier FRS.1 of 800 Naval Air Squadron crashed into the sea north-east of the Falklands shortly after take-off from HMS *Hermes*. Lieutenant Commander Gordon Batt DSC RN was killed in the subsequent explosion.

24 The fires on HMS *Antelope* continued to burn through the night and then, shortly after dawn, another major explosion occurred. The ship's back was broken and she sank with her bows and stern sticking out of the water.

MAIN PICTURE: Lieutenant Peter Manley and Petty Officer Arthur Balls in Westland Wessex HU.5 XT484, of 'A' Flight 845 NAS, fire one of their two AS12 missiles at the Town Hall in Stanley, 11 June 1982. Their mission had been to target members of the Argentine High Command at their daily command meeting. The Town Hall, however, was not hit by either of the missiles fired from the Wessex. This painting, again by the French artist Daniel Bechennec, was the result of much collaboration between pilot and painter. (Courtesy of Daniel Bechennec)

The RFA vessels *Sir Lancelot* and *Sir Galahad*, which were positioned off Ajax Bay, were hit by two 1,000lb bombs which failed to explode, though devastating fires were started. The RFA *Sir Bedivere* was also struck by a bomb which glanced off the crane forward of the bridge, passed through a bulwark and then fell into the sea where it exploded.

25 The destroyer HMS *Coventry* was bombed and sunk, whilst HMS *Broadsword* was damaged. The container ship *Atlantic Conveyor* was hit by an Exocet missile and subsequently abandonedwith the loss of three vital Chinook helicopters. Twelve were killed in this attack.

An SAS patrol reconnoitred Mount Kent to the west of Stanley.

26 The War Cabinet questioned the lack of movement out of the bridgehead at San Carlos. The men of 2 Para started out for Goose Green.

27 45 Commando and 3 Para began their advance upon Douglas and Teal Inlet, whilst the SAS was landed in strength on Mount Kent.

A Harrier GR.3 of 1 Squadron RAF was shot down over Goose Green, probably by 35mm Oerlikon fire. Squadron Leader G. Iveson ejected to the west, hid up and was later rescued.

28 British shelling of Stanley by air and sea recommenced and continued for the next sixteen days. The fourth *Black Buck* mission, involving Vulcan XM597, was aborted, but only some five hours after the Vulcan had taken off.

A Westland Scout was shot down near Camilla Creek House, north of Goose Green, by Argentine Pucaras at 11.55 hours. The pilot, Lieutenant Richard Nunn RM (3 Commando Brigade Air Squadron), was killed.

29 British forces captured the defended Argentine positions at Darwin and Goose Green with the loss of seventeen men. The Argentine death toll was ten times greater and 1,400 prisoners were taken. Colonel "H" Jones was killed in the fighting and was subsequently awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross.

An 801 Naval Air Squadron Sea Harrier that was being prepared for take-off, slid off the deck of HMS *Invincible* as the carrier turned into wind to the east of Falklands. Lieutenant Commander M. Broadwater RN ejected and was safely picked up.

The Organisation of American States condemned the United Kingdom's military action and called on the US to stop providing assistance to Britain – only the US, Chile, Columbia and Trinidad & Tobago abstained.

An Argentine Hercules transport aircraft dropped bombs on MV *British*

MAIN PICTURE: The detritus of war scattered around the slopes of Goat Ridge which is located to the west of Tumbledown. This area played a part in the fighting for Mount Tumbledown. The Scots Guards, for example, were to be airlifted to their assembly area which was just west of Goat Ridge. (Courtesy of Jon Cooksey)

Wye some 400 miles north of South Georgia. No damage was caused.

30 3 Para and 45 Commando reached Estancia House and Teal Inlet. Mount Kent was captured by 42 Commando and the SAS. Stanley was now surrounded.

A 1 Squadron RAF Harrier GR.3 was damaged near Stanley by small arms fire from Argentine troops. It ran out of fuel short of HMS *Hermes* and the pilot, Squadron Leader Jerry Pook RAF, was forced to eject. He was subsequently rescued to the east of the Falklands.

31 Men from 42 Commando captured Mount Kent and Mount Challenger. Nineteen men from the Royal Marines Mountain and Arctic Warfare Cadre captured Top Malo House after a fire fight in which two Argentines were killed, six wounded and another four taken prisoner. Three members of the British force were wounded.

ABOVE: **On 6 June 1982, a Gazelle of 656 Squadron Army Air Corps, similar to that seen here near Goat Ridge during the advance on Stanley, was the last British aircraft to be shot down in the Falklands War. The helicopter, XX377, was hit in a "friendly-fire" incident west of Fitzroy when a Sea Dart surface-to-air-missile was fired by HMS *Cardiff*. Stationed to the east of the islands, the Type 42 destroyer's crew had been engaged on lookout duties for aircraft flying supplies to the Argentine forces occupying the islands. At around 02:00 hours a radar contact was detected; the helicopter was making a routine delivery of personnel and equipment to a radio rebroadcast station on East Falkland but from the contact's speed and course, *Cardiff*'s operations room crew assumed it to be hostile. The Gazelle's wreckage and crew were discovered the next morning. The pilot, Staff Sergeant Christopher Griffin, crewman Lance Corporal Simon Cockton and two Royal Signals passengers, Major Michael Forge, the OC of 205 Signal Squadron, and one of his technicians, Staff Sergeant John Baker, were all killed.** (Glenn Sands Collection)

JUNE

1 5 Brigade lands at San Carlos.
A Roland surface-to-air-missile was used to bring down the 801 Naval Air Squadron Sea Harrier flown by Flight Lieutenant I. Mortimer RAF into the sea south of Stanley. Mortimer ejected and was later rescued from the water after nine hours afloat.
The United Kingdom repeated its ceasefire terms.

2 Argentine Military envoys arrived in New York offering to surrender to the UN.
Meanwhile, the British advance continued with 2 Para being airlifted to Fitzroy.

3 Operation *Black Buck VI*, flown by Squadron Leader Neil McDougall in XM597, was carried out. The target that was attacked and destroyed, killing a number of the operators, was a fire-control radar unit.

4 2 Para occupied the undefended settlements at Bluff Cove and Fitzroy.

5 The Scots Guards departed San Carlos at night on board HMS *Intrepid* bound for Fitzroy.

6 The Scots Guards landed at Fitzroy early in the morning.

7 A shortage of landing craft meant that half of the Welsh Guards landed at Fitzroy in early morning but the rest returned to San Carlos, from where they left again at night on board the *Sir Galahad* and *Sir Tristram*.

8 Argentine aircraft attacked the British troops landing at Bluff Cove. The landing ship *Sir Galahad* was struck at Bluff Cove, whilst *Sir Tristram* was also hit at Fitzroy. Fifty-one men were killed, a number that included thirty-eight Welsh Guards, and a further fifty-five were seriously wounded.
In Falkland Sound, HMS *Plymouth* was hit by four Argentine bombs but none exploded.

9 The unloading at San Carlos continued unabated, disturbed only by two air warnings.

10 Argentine and British forces clashed at Many Branch Point, a ridge near Port Howard in West Falkland. The engagement ended with the death of the SAS patrol commander, Captain Gavin John Hamilton (the OC 19 (Mountain) Troop, ‘D’ Squadron, 22 SAS). This action was the onlyland engagement on West Falkland during the conflict. When Colonel Juan Ramon Mabragaña, the Argentine commander of Port Howard, was interrogated after the Argentine surrender, he asked that “the SAS Captain” be decorated for his actions as he had been “the most courageous man I have ever seen”. Hamilton was awarded a posthumous Military Cross.
Peru sent ten Mirage jets to Argentina to replenish its losses.

11 The Battle for Stanley began on Mount Longdon, Mount Harriet and Two Sisters. Twenty-three Paras and fifty Argentines were killed in the bitter fighting.
Three islanders were killed during a British naval bombardment of Stanley.

12 The men of 3 Para took Mount Longdon – another six Paras and fifty Argentines were killed. Sergeant Ian McKay of 3 Para, who was killed on Mount Longdon, was subsequently awarded the Victoria Cross. 42 Commando captured Mount Harriet and 45 Commando took Two Sisters.
The final *Black Buck* mission was undertaken by Flight Lieutenant Martin Withers and his crew in Vulcan XM607.

The destroyer HMS *Glamorgan* was badly damaged by a land-launched Exocet missile. Thirteen crewmen were killed.

13 The battles for Tumbledown, Wireless Ridge and Mount William see fifteen British and forty Argentine servicemen killed.
In a surprise attack, the Argentine air forces on the mainland launched a dozen aircraft in an attempt to stiffen the resolve of the slowly collapsing Argentine resistance and attacked British positions. The force flew east across the Falklands to Port Stanley at low level before it turned and headed west and attacked British positions at Mount Kent.

14 As dawn broke, Argentine troops were observed fleeing in disarray.
By mid-morning white flags were flying in Stanley. British troops had marched to the outskirts of Stanley by noon.

General Mario Menendez surrendered to Major General Jeremy Moore at 21.00 hours FI time.
At 22.15 hours GMT, Margaret Thatcher informed the Commons that the Argentines had surrendered. Some 9,800 Argentine troops had laid down their weapons.

15 British officers were flown by helicopter to outlying settlements and accepted the surrender of isolated Argentine units.

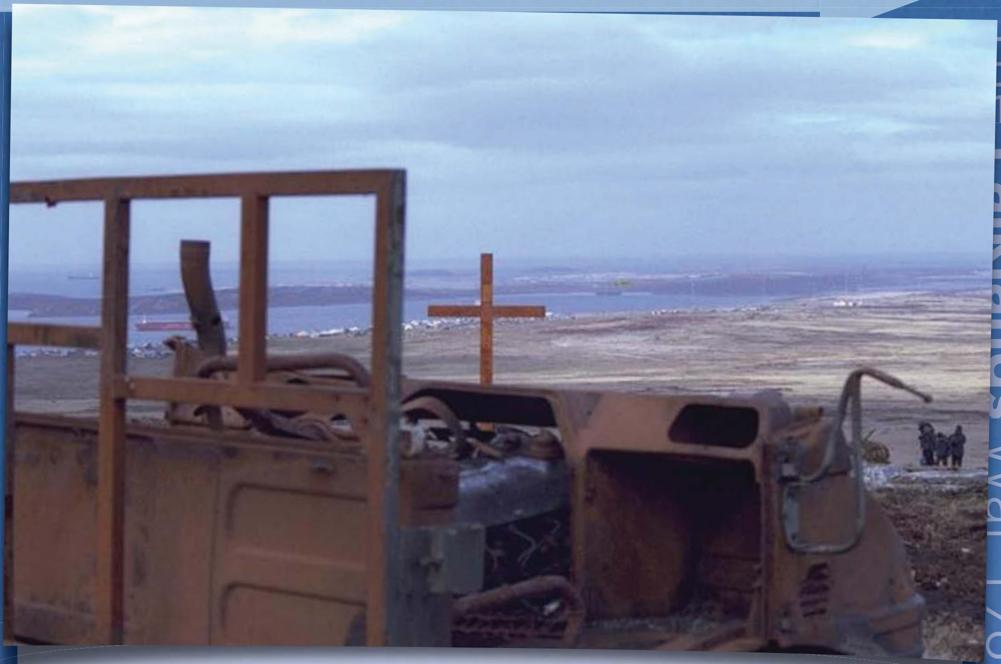
16 Peter Blaker, Minister of State for Defence, announced that the official count of British military and civilian war dead was 255, with approximately 300 wounded.

17 General Galtieri resigned.

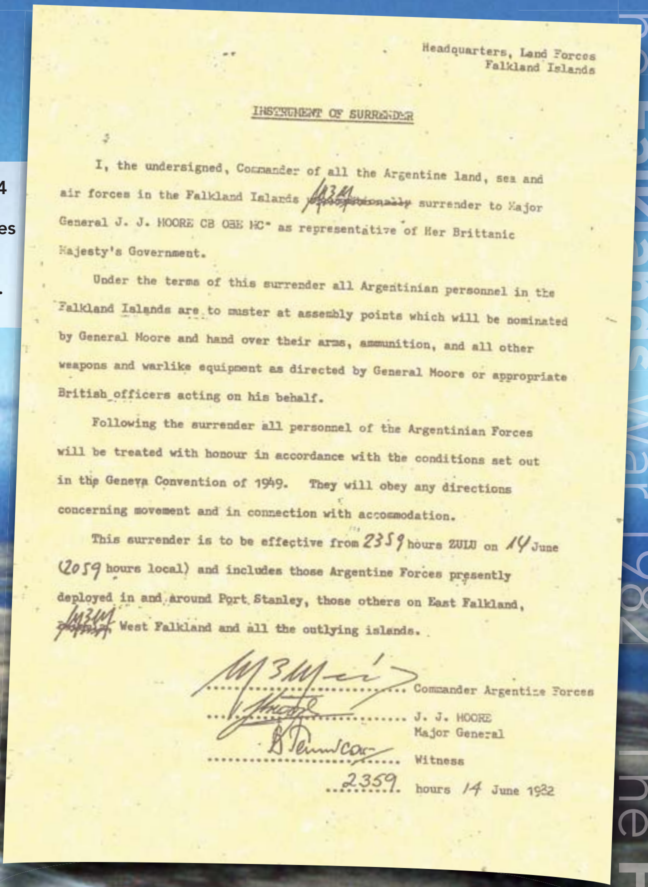
18 Having been guaranteed safe passage, SS *Canberra* sailed from Port William with 3,046 Argentine PoWs on board.

19 SS *Canberra* docked at Puerto Madryn, Argentina, and disembarked the PoWs. The UK announced that a total of 11,845 Argentines had been captured.

20 British forces landed on Southern Thule (South Sandwich Islands) where the Argentine commander surrendered without a fight.
The 200-mile Total Exclusion Zone was replaced by a Falklands Protection Zone of 150 miles.
Britain formally declared an end to hostilities.



ABOVE: **TTo the south of Stanley, near Mount Tumbledown and Mount William, is Sapper Hill. It was named after a company of sappers who were based at Moody Brook Barracks. Because of its proximity to Stanley, Sapper Hill was of huge strategic importance. In this picture, with burnt-out Argentinean transport in the foreground, Stanley itself can be seen in the middle of the picture with Stanley Harbour just beyond. The airport is to the right.** (Courtesy of Eddie Munday)



Headquarters, Land Forces
Falkland Islands

INSTRUMENT OF SURRENDER

I, the undersigned, Commander of all the Argentine land, sea and air forces in the Falkland Islands M3M ~~unconditionally~~ surrender to Major General J. J. MOORE CB OBE MC* as representative of Her Brittanic Majesty's Government.

Under the terms of this surrender all Argentinian personnel in the Falkland Islands are to muster at assembly points which will be nominated by General Moore and hand over their arms, ammunition, and all other weapons and warlike equipment as directed by General Moore or appropriate British officers acting on his behalf.

Following the surrender all personnel of the Argentinian Forces will be treated with honour in accordance with the conditions set out in the Geneva Convention of 1949. They will obey any directions concerning movement and in connection with accommodation.

This surrender is to be effective from 2359 hours ZULU on 14 June (2059 hours local) and includes those Argentine Forces presently deployed in and around Port Stanley, those others on East Falkland, M3M West Falkland and all the outlying islands.

M3Menéndez .... Commander Argentine Forces
.... J. J. MOORE
Major General
B Pennicott .... Witness
2359 hours 14 June 1982

RIGHT: **At 21.00 hours on Monday, 14 June 1982, the piece of paper sealing the surrender of the Argentinian Forces in the Falkland Islands was signed. Note in the second line how the word "unconditional" has been crossed out.** (HMP)

MAIN PICTURE: **The memorial cross on Mount Harriet. This peak, to the east of Stanley, was the location of one of three brigade-sized engagements that took place overnight of 11/12 June 1982 – an action in which the British forces had two men killed and twenty-six wounded.** (Courtesy of Tim Lynch)

BEHIND ENEMY

For the first time since the Germans set foot on the Channel Islands in the Second World War a sovereign British territory and its people found themselves under enemy occupation. It was a situation that the Falkland Islanders were not prepared to accept without making things as difficult as they could for the invaders.

Nichols Kasanzew, an Argentine journalist, knew from the beginning that the Islanders were going to be trouble: "The Kelpers [Islanders] were our arch-enemies. From the first moment, I felt they were going to be fifth columnists. I was not mistaken. They are basically shepherds; primitive in their way of life. In their character and their appearance, they are hybrids. Their attitude towards Argentina was absolutely negative. Kelpers, like the English, respect nothing except force."

The Argentines fully expected there to be at least a degree of civil disobedience and they were highly suspicious of the Islanders – and with good reason. Indeed, some of the more determined members of the community were intent on outright violence and had to be persuaded to moderate their actions in favour of more subtle activities. Almost immediately after the arrival of the invaders the Islands' Chief Secretary Dick Baker, organized a clandestine meeting to discuss what resistance the Islanders should engage in. "We had to do a bit of restraining with Steve Whitley because he was all for going out and sabotaging things, and sticking knives in a few Argentines," recalled Baker, who responded by saying: "If we start doing things like that they may march out a few wives and children and shoot them."

It was agreed that "the best thing was to make things as difficult as possible for the Argentines while maintaining the services that we needed. An example was the way many government vehicles would suddenly become unserviceable."

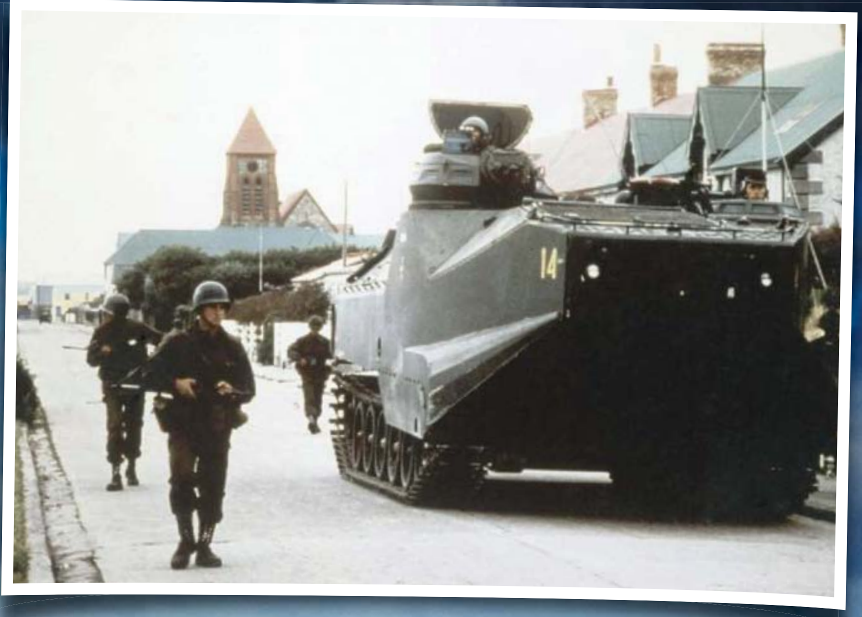
So the Falkland Islanders resistance developed in its many forms. Electricians Les Harris and Bob Gilbert cut off Argentine power supplies and inserted low tolerance fuses to halt transformers serving the military. Veterinary officer Steve Whitley, who would later suffer the death of his wife, for instance, was dissuaded from using his knives on the Argentines, but he and teacher Phil Middleton indulged in the "dangerous mischief" of cutting army telephone wires with his vet's castrating scissors, and taking clandestine photos of Argentine defences.

"Steve had his 'magic scissors', a gelding tool that he used to cut the army telephone wires," recalled Middleton. "Every time we went into a house that we knew the Argentinians were about to take over we would walk around and make sure it was all right. Snip, snip! … I remember sitting in the front seat of the Land Rover, and suddenly this lens would appear over my shoulder or under my armpit. Steve would be in the back taking pictures."

Possibly the most widespread resistance activity was the information gathering undertaken by the Islanders and their communication by radio and telephone. This was undertaken in defiance of a strict ban on all such activities.

One of the most notable of these resistors was Reg Silvey, the Cape Pembroke lighthouse keeper and former British Antarctic Survey radio expert. Silvey was a radio ham and he indulged in his hobby by transmitting

LINES



MAIN PICTURE: **Reg Silvey, the keeper of the Cape Pembroke lighthouse (seen here) and former British Antarctic Survey radio expert, utilised his hobby as a radio ham by transmitting intelligence to Britain at great risk throughout the occupation from his stone cottage. Located on East Falkland, Cape Pembroke is the easternmost point of the Falkland Islands.** (Courtesy of Paul J. Davis)

ABOVE: **A LVTP-7 Amphibious Assault Vehicle of the Argentine Batallón de Vehículos Anfibios (Amphibious Vehicles Battalion) on patrol in Stanley shortly after Argentine forces took control of the Falkland Islands and occupied the capital. This image was taken in Ross Road outside the Upland Goose Hotel, with Christ Church Cathedral behind.**

intelligence to Britain at great risk throughout the occupation from his stone cottage. Despite using radio detector vans, the invaders failed to discover his transmissions.

His call sign, "Victor Papa Eight", was picked up by another radio ham, Bob North, who was based many thousands of miles away in Rotherham, Yorkshire. Speaking in 2002, North recalled the moment that he first heard Silvey's voice.

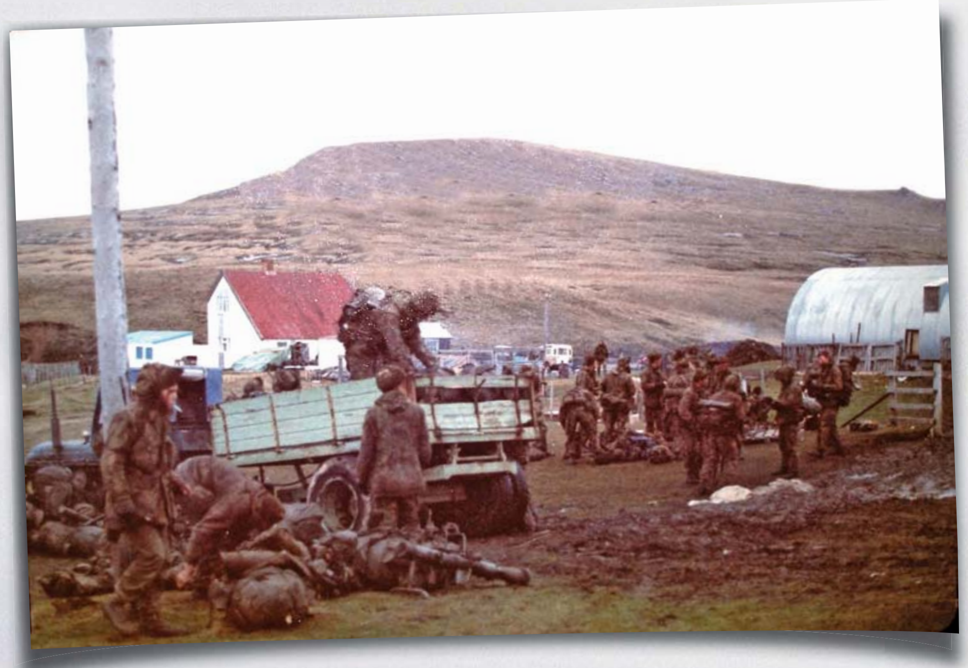
"It was about 20.00 GMT," he noted, "two days after the invasion. I heard a station trying to contact me with a VP8 call sign. I suddenly realised that this could be in the Falkland Islands. I told the VP8 to repeat his call, which he did, telling me that his call sign was VP8QE, his name was Reg, and that he was in Port Stanley. Could I get some urgent messages through to his relations?"[1]

So began a remarkable series of transmissions. Silvey fooled the Argentines by handing in a spare radio which had been smuggled to him by George Betts, captain of the *Monsumen* supply ship. He then dismantled his normal landmark aerial, adapting a brilliantly simple substitute – his steel-core washing line stretched across his garden. To keep the invaders from investigating his property, he illegally acquired a notice signed by the Argentine Military Governor, General Menendez, denying entry to Argentine soldiers as, it proclaimed, his house had been cleared by the military police!

He thereafter indulged in serious spying with all its dangers, sending fifteen-second bursts of intelligence about Argentine gun emplacements and revealing that Stanley Airport was occupied by Argentine soldiers. He was never arrested nor subject to arbitrary searches that plagued so many other Islanders. Nor was his dangerous work ever officially acknowledged. Other radio hams at Port Louis – Chilean Mario Zuvic, Andres Short and his father – also intercepted, confused and jammed Argentine signals.

Others, though, were not so lucky. When Robin Pitaluga on Salvador farm used his radio to try to pass a message from the Task Force to the Argentines to surrender, heavily armed men were flown in to arrest, interrogate and terrorise him. During this terrifying episode, a revolver was held to his neck and the trigger pulled several times – thankfully the weapon contained no rounds. The final act saw Pitaluga tied up and left in a trench overnight. He was subsequently put under house arrest. For the simple act of tuning in to the BBC World Service, Denzil Clausen was beaten up (the Argentines claimed that he was in fact transmitting messages).[2]

Broadcasting officer, Patrick Watts, was recognized with an award for his courage and stamina in relaying the Governor's messages as the invasion unfolded and keeping Islanders informed of the developing situation, even when Argentine soldiers burst into his studio with guns. His broadcasts, the citation reads, "sustained the Islanders throughout the invasion night, with no exhortations to violence, no impassioned condemnation of the invaders, and



ABOVE: **A snapshot of 3 Para sorting themselves out after their epic march via Teal Inlet. Mount Estancia, thought to be held by Argentine troops upon 3 Para's approach, assisted by the Islanders (note the tractor and trailer transport), can be seen in the background.** (Courtesy of Tony Heathman, via After the Battle)

certainly no suggestion of fear. The tone had been subtly subversive and defiant but dignified; indicative of a community that might be beaten but would not be bowed."

Though most Islanders did whatever they could to obstruct or defy the invaders, without doubt the most famous of the resistors was Terry Peck. Born and bred in the Falklands, the descendent of Irish and English emigrants, Peck joined the Police Force and became a member of the Falkland Islands Defence Force. A well-known character throughout the islands, Peck became Chief of Police and, in 1975, he was awarded the Colonial Police Medal, though he had left the force prior to the Argentine invasion. Fears of Argentine aggression prompted Peck to rejoin as a Special Constable. The very next day the invasion began.

There was nothing that Terry Peck could do to stop the invasion, but he was determined to help re-gain control of the islands. In the initial stages, he walked about with a camera with a telephoto lens concealed in a length of drainpipe taking pictures of military targets which were smuggled out for British intelligence officers to study. Locals who saw him were concerned about his strange behaviour. The Argentines, on the other hand, must have assumed that Islanders often wandered around the streets clutching large pieces of plumbing as at first they made no effort to stop him.

However, their suspicions finally aroused, the Argentines decided to arrest Peck. Tipped off, he was able to flee Stanley on a 'liberated" Suzuki motorcycle.

Peck was now on the run, though he received help from everyone he turned to, and his identity card was skilfully altered to "Jerry Packer". He rode up to Long Island Farm only for a Puma helicopter to land shortly after his arrival. The farmhouse was quickly surrounded and Peck, realising that there was no escape, hid in the toilet.

The Argentines left and Peck, who had remained undisturbed in the toilet, made his escape, reaching the hamlet of Green Patch – only for the Puma to reappear once more. This time there was no chance of concealment so he told the Argentine officer that interrogated him that he was a travelling plumber.

His story was believed and the Argentines flew off. The two meetings with the Argentines convinced Peck that if he was to remain at large he had to stay away from settlements. His plan was to spend the coming days in the open, observing and waiting for news of the British forces. Peck was able to acquire some warm clothing and boots left behind at Green Patch by Royal Navy personnel from HMS *Endurance*.

He set up a rough camp at Geordie's Valley, visiting local villages to supplement his meagre, cold rations. He was readily helped wherever he appeared. Neil Watson of Long Island Farm knew where the Falklands' Royal Marine detachment had buried their weapons before they surrendered and Peck was able to arm himself with grenades, a 7.62 rifle and a pistol.

Peck had also been given a radio and when on 21 May he received the message from Isobel Short that, "We've just received a lot of friends", Peck knew that his time had come. The next morning he rode to Elephant Beach House and called up San Carlos. He asked to speak to a senior British officer and when he got through he informed the soldier that he was going to join up with them.

*

Terry Peck's knowledge of the Argentine dispositions, the routes to Stanley and the local people who could be called upon to help, was indispensible. It was decided that he could be of most use attached to 3 Para's 'D' Patrol Company. This sixty-strong unit was

to move ahead of the main advance, establishing the whereabouts of the enemy forces and their defences. The company commander was glad to have Peck with him: "The bloke had extracted himself out of Stanley, had made his way to Port San Carlos, and done his thing on the way. So there was no doubt that he was a man of some calibre."

The Paras made their way across country without difficulty, followed by the rest of the battalion. Transporting all their food, water and equipment, however, was an entirely different matter. With only the one Chinook helicopter to help shift men and equipment the advance would be slow at best – until Peck had a brilliant idea.

The friends who had supported him during his days of rough living were little more than an hour's drive away. Between them they had tractors, trailers, Land Rovers and, above all, the cross-country driving skills to establish and maintain a supply line. Peck suggested that these people should be contacted.

This agreed, he called Trudi Morrison (now Trudi McPhee) on his radio and asked her to gather as many vehicles together as she could. Her parents were worried about her undertaking this risky manoeuvre. Trudi responded: "There is no way I am going to miss this. I am doing my bit for my country."

As the undisputed leader of the operation, she gathered a wagon train from every farm in the area. She drove a Land Rover, whilst her partner, Roddy McKay, accompanied her in an "old and incredibly noisy caterpillar tractor". The immediate task was to help move 300 Paras and specialist support teams up into their tactical positions on Estancia Mountains. The tractor teams were soon loaded with men, rations, ammunition and water, and moving across the virtually trackless terrain.

Major Roger Patton of the 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, developed a profound respect for the resourcefulness, determination and downright courage of these Islanders, particularly Trudi. "I don't know how we could have managed without them," he later said. "Trudi was the focal point. It needed someone to get a grip and she took it upon herself to do so." When being briefed by the military, one officer said: "Such was her strength of character, it was not always clear who was giving orders to whom!"

Trudi distributed the tasks to the tractor teams who, with little sleep, continued to transport all their equipment and supplies, sometimes in driving rain, to their positions on Mount Estancia, shuttling supplies around the clock, within range of Argentine artillery and mortars and sometimes bomb attack. Later they even evacuated dreadfully wounded soldiers back to helicopters at Teal Inlet.

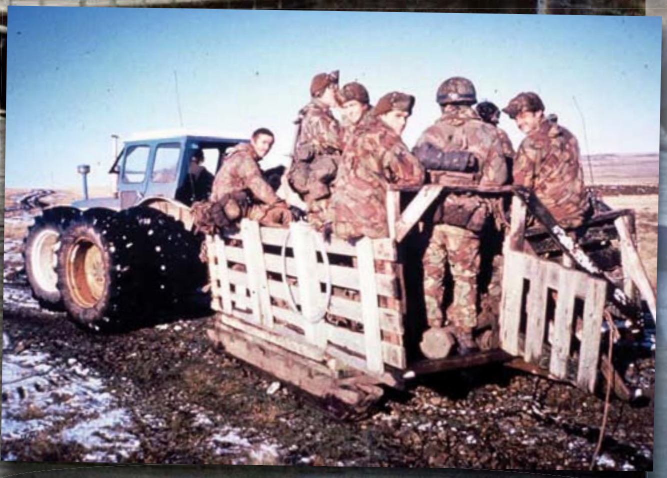
Terry Peck said: "I'd never seen driving like it. I don't think anybody could better it. They were just an amazing bunch of people. They just could not do enough to help." Major Pat Butler, OC of 'D' Patrol Company, said: "I have the absolute deepest respect for them."

When the Paras moved on to Mount Longdon, Terry Peck and fellow Islander Vernon Steen, who had both been members of the Falkland Islands Defence Force, were given rifles and uniforms and joined the Patrol Company. Butler explained how useful the two men were as guides:

"We secured the sole use of Mount Longdon, which meant Special Forces and others stayed away, and we planned a very detailed close target recce operation. This means putting troops onto the objective and working out in as much detail as possible where the enemy is, what weapons he has, what protection he has in the form of minefields, wire and so on. It is very painstaking work and very dangerous.

MAIN PICTURE: Along with a number of others, Eric Goss, the farm manager at Goose Green, a settlement in Lafonia on East Falkland (seen here), hid petrol and immobilised tractors to prevent their use by the Argentines. They also sabotaged water pipes serving the occupiers. When the Argentines asked about lights in the distance, presumably from British patrols, Eric made up the story that they were "a curious local phenomenon - moonlight reflecting on seaweed-covered rocks at low tide"! He also partook in a little psychological warfare. When the Gurkhas arrived in the Falklands, Eric told the Argentines they were fearsome fighters. "When you wake up in the morning, just shake your head. If it falls off, the Gurkhas have been around," he is reputed to have said.

ABOVE: Remembrance crosses placed on Mount Longdon – one for each of the 3 Para dead. It was here that one of the fiercest engagements of the whole conflict took place – the same night as the action at Mount Harriet. (Courtesy of Tim Lynch)



BELOW: British troops making use of the transport provided by one of Trudi Morrison's team of Islanders in their advance east.

"This operation was of such intensity that we had to run a system in which one patrol always had the opportunity to dry out and rest. We would have one patrol acting as an 'anchor' in an OP, reporting by day as well. At night a second patrol of four men would move forward onto Longdon.

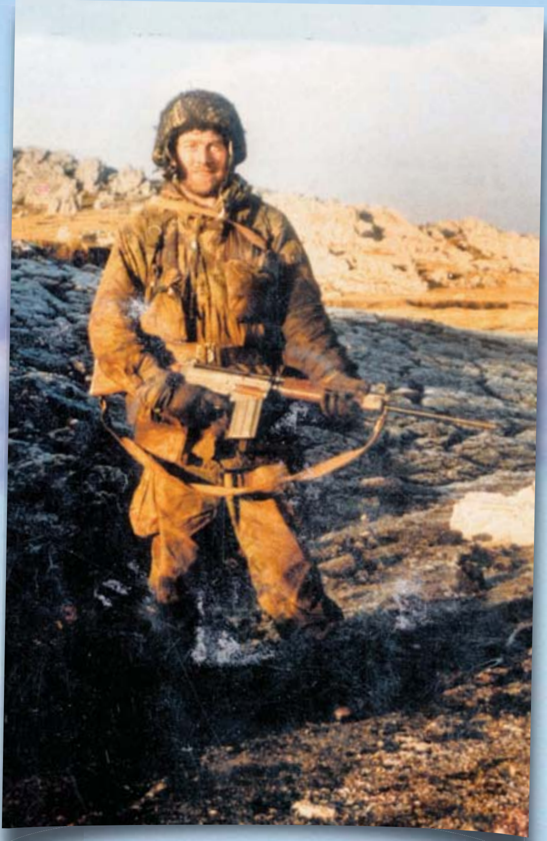
"By night we would always have our men on the hill – that's where Terry and Vernon did their thing. We kept this going between the 1st and 10th of June."

When Mount Longdon was attacked, on the night of 12 June, the two Islanders were each asked to guide a rifle company to make sure that no-one went astray. Meanwhile, Trudi Morrison's gaggle of tractor drivers and Land Rovers carted mortars and ammunition up to the attack start line.

That night Trudi was given the task of directing the vehicles. Major Patton instructed her to walk ahead of the blacked-out vehicles. He gave her a pair of white gloves and told her to indicate left and right turnings with her hands. He also gave her a field dressing and a hypodermic loaded with morphine. If she was hit or stood on a mine, one jab from the needle would bring relief.

Amongst those helping transport the Paras' supplies was Trevor Browning with

RIGHT: **Terry Peck pictured in "borrowed" items of uniform, and equipped with an SLR, on Mount Longdon after the fighting in which he and Steen participated.** (Courtesy of Terry Peck, via After the Battle)



MAIN PICTURE: **A view of the crest of Mount Longdon with one of the 105mm recoilless rifles used by the Argentine defenders still in situ. Stanley can be seen in the distance. Two of the Islanders assisting the British forces participated in the fighting on Longdon – Terry Peck and Vernon Steen. Scouting ahead for the group in which Sergeant Ian McKay was killed in the action for which he was awarded the Victoria Cross, Peck and Steen made it to the first line of Argentine trenches capturing soldiers still in their sleeping bags. When a soldier was shot near Peck, he volunteered to carry the man back down the mountain. His account describes the action: "We carried him down this slope but sometimes we had to lie across him, because of the fire that was coming. We were catching it left, right and centre. It was lit up like Blackpool. Really horrendous. We got this guy down into a crater caused by a shell. We had eight wounded in that hole with two medics, that's how big the hole was."** (Courtesy of Jon Cooksey)

his Land Rover. At one point during the approach to Murrell Bridge, north-west of Stanley, Argentine artillery selected it as a target, illuminating the area with star-shells. It was here that Trevor's Land Rover became stuck up to its axles in mud.

"There was an awful thump alongside us," remembered Browning. "The Para shouted, 'Out! Out! Get down!' The shells landed about fifty feet away and they were definitely aiming for us. Eight or ten shells came in and we lay there for what seemed a long time but it was probably only about fifteen minutes. I was down this hole that was half full of water, and I didn't feel it. All I thought about was my family."

The attack upon Mount Longdon was supposed to be conducted in silence to surprise the Argentines. Terry Peck was with 'A' Company. As they quietly climbed the mountain, a soldier from Vernon Steen's 'B' Company stepped on a mine. "Our 'silent' attack went into the noisiest thing I've ever heard," Peck said later, "and I still had that funny thought; 'This is supposed to be quiet! Why is everybody screaming, shouting and making such a noise?'

"The shooting coming from the mountain was bloody ferocious. It was so thick and heavy that if you put your finger up it would be taken off. Guys were falling by this time. You lay down behind a tiny little bog of grass and you thought it was great cover, but all around was the noise of the grass being hit. The bullets were making funny noises hitting the ground. I was taking shit in the eyes and things like that."

After the battle Vernon Steen was assigned to guard prisoners. Terry Peck remained on the summit of Mount Longdon with 'A' Company until, at last, the Argentines surrendered.

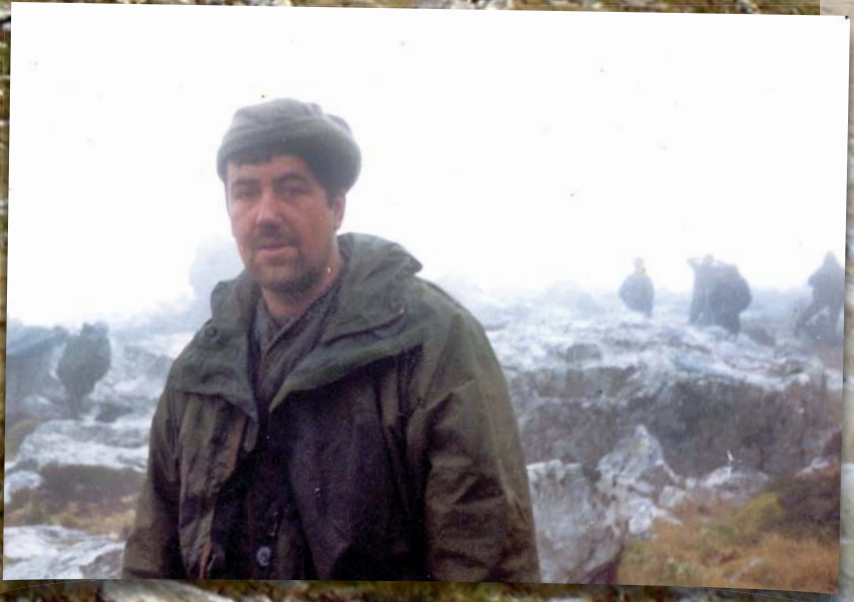
Trudi Morrison was awarded a military commendation from the Task Force's Commander in Chief, Admiral Sir John Fieldhouse: "On June 11th, Mrs Trudi Morrison drove a Land Rover in support of the 3rd Battalion The Parachute Regiment's operation to secure Mount Longdon. Travelling across the most appalling terrain, without lights, she drove one of only three Land Rovers which successfully arrived at the mortar line ... At times under enemy artillery fire, Mrs Morrison remained resolved to continue, showing tremendous steadfastness in dangerous and unfamiliar circumstances."

Terrence John Peck was awarded the MBE, as was Patrick Watts. ■

Acknowledgement:
The above stories are just some of those that are told in detail in Invasion 1982: *The Falkland Islanders'* Story by Graham Bound, published by Pen and Sword Books, Barnsley. For more information, please visit: www.pen-and-sword.co.uk

NOTES:

1. *The Guardian*, Monday, 25 February 2002.
2. Quoted on the Falkland Islands Information Portal: www.falklands.info, and based on an article which first appeared in the Falkland Islands Newsletter, Edition 78, March 2001.



BELOW: The morning after the fighting on Mount Longdon, Terry Peck took this photograph of an exhausted Private Jim "Scouse" Pritchard shrouded in the mist and smoke, the latter from the still burning Argentine sangars. Some of his 3 Para colleagues are still busy rounding up prisoners; one Argentine to Pritchard's right has his hands on his head. (Courtesy of Jon Cooksey)

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MAINTAINING the Fight

Few would argue that the distances involved for those serving in the South Atlantic were, at times, daunting. Here Glenn Sands examines the massive logistical effort required to send an army and a fleet to the Falkland Islands, and in particular the little-known air bridge which flew supplies via Ascension Island, the airport of which became, at the time, the busiest in the world.

The decision by Britain to take military action to recover the Falkland Islands immediately raised the first and most obvious problem – distance. The distance between the Falklands and the United Kingdom presented a major logistical challenge to any form of military response. Nearly 8,000 miles away from Britain's shores, but only 350 miles from mainland Argentina, the geography of the Falkland Islands appeared to favour the invaders right from the start. This factor had, no doubt, played a major role in the Argentine Junta's decision making.

The nearest possible base for any expeditionary force was Ascension Island, a small British protectorate about halfway between the UK and the Falklands. Although the use of Ascension Island was to prove invaluable throughout the conflict, the logistics of maintaining a naval task force and thousands of troops for several weeks would stretch the UK's resources to the very limit.

However, it was not simply geography that proved a challenge in the conflict. The Falklands crisis arose at a time of great change for the British armed forces. Defence reviews had recommended a reduction in the nation's military presence overseas throughout the 1960s and 1970s. The withdrawal from the Far East, the Middle East and the Mediterranean had resulted in a huge reduction in the size of the UK's armed forces. Consequently, by 1982 the RAF's strategic transport fleet had shrunk from five squadrons in 1975 to just one squadron of thirteen Vickers VC-10 C.1s at the time of the Argentine invasion.

HERO HERKS

The first transport aircraft to leave the United Kingdom were four RAF C130 Hercules C.1s – XV189, XV196, XV304 and XV306 – which flew from RAF Lyneham to Gibraltar on 2 April, commencing the type's involvement in Operation *Corporate*. During the next few days an "Air Bridge" was established between the United Kingdom and Wideawake Airfield on Ascension Island. Daily departures from Lyneham reached a peak of sixteen aircraft on 29 April, (nine to Dakar, one to Banjul and six to Gibraltar) as the requirement to

BELOW: The vital stepping stone in the Air Bridge that was established between the United Kingdom and the Falklands Islands in 1982 – Ascension Island. The airfield, RAF Ascension, can be seen on the island's south-western corner. The first aircraft to land on Ascension Island was a Fairey Swordfish operating from HMS *Archer* in 1942. In agreement with the British government, the USAAF established Wideawake Airfield (named after a colony of Sooty Terns, locally referred to as "Wideawake" birds because of their loud, distinctive call, which would wake people early in the morning) in 1943. (Courtesy of the Image Science & Analysis Laboratory, NASA Johnson Space Center) transport stores and equipment to ships en route to the South Atlantic increased.

Yet such was the need to get supplies directly to the first elements of the Task Force already en route to, or in, the South Atlantic, that a series of air-drops were made directly to the ships. The first of these missions commenced during the third week of April, using a standard C.1s. However, it was already clear to the planners that the Hercules would need to be able to fly further to carry out personnel and supply drops to the Task Force as it travelled south towards the Total Exclusion Zone. Using cylindrical auxiliary tanks, which had been in storage since the retirement of the Andover and Argosy fleets, by 20 April, Lyneham's Engineering Wing had devised a two-tank installation inside the forward fuselage. This increased the endurance of the Hercules C.1 by three to four hours.

A similar four-tank installation was developed to allow even longer-range missions but this resulted in a substantial reduction in payload, so its use was restricted to only high value airdrops at extreme range from Ascension Island. The Hercules transports that received the long-range tanks were referred to as LR2s or LR4s, depending on the number of tanks installed.

REACHING THAT BIT FURTHER

The first extended-range Hercules C.1, XV196, was deployed to Wideawake on 4 May 1982. The first mission was launched at 00.55Z (i.e. Greenwich Mean Time) three days later and lasted some eighteen hours, although the airdrop itself, to HMS *Plymouth*, was cancelled at the last moment due to bad weather.

A more successful flight the following day resulted in a drop to HMS *Plymouth*, HMS *Antrim* and HMS *Yarmouth*, with XV196 remaining airborne for seventeen hours and ten minutes. Three further missions were flown from Wideawake by the aircraft and 47 Squadron Special Forces Flight before returning non-stop to Lyneham on 16 May. The demanding nature of these early extended-range missions meant that they were initially flown by the Special Forces Flight, after which similar drops were performed by 70 Squadron. The RAF's two remaining Hercules squadrons were not trained in the tactical support role and were restricted to what were rapidly becoming routine shuttle flights between the United Kingdom and Ascension Island.

The only other long-range C.1 deployed to the theatre for a sustained period was XV291, which arrived at Wideawake, direct from Lyneham, on 15 May. Its most notable flight was a sixteen hours and forty minutes round trip to HMS *Leeds Castle* that launched at 07.35Z on 18 May and flown by 47 Squadron. The Hercules returned to Lyneham via Gibraltar on 24 May, bringing an end to the operational use of the LRs.

PROBE POSSIBILITIES

In the United Kingdom, the RAF had approached the Marshall aerospace company of Cambridge in the first week of April regarding the possibility of installing an inflight refuelling probe on its Hercules C.1 fleet to extend the range of the aircraft.

LEFT: **The huge increase in activity at Wideawake keeps a group of young Ascension islanders entertained during the fighting in the South Atlantic. Note the presence of the USAF Military Airlift Command aircraft. This image was taken at some point between April and June 1982.** (Courtesy of Bob Shackleton, via Gordon Smith, Naval-History.Net)

ABOVE RIGHT: **An aerial view of RAF aircraft lined up on the apron at Wideawake Airfield during the Falklands War. Four Nimrod aircraft can be seen in the foreground, whilst Victor K2 tankers are visible in the background.** (Glenn Sands Collection)

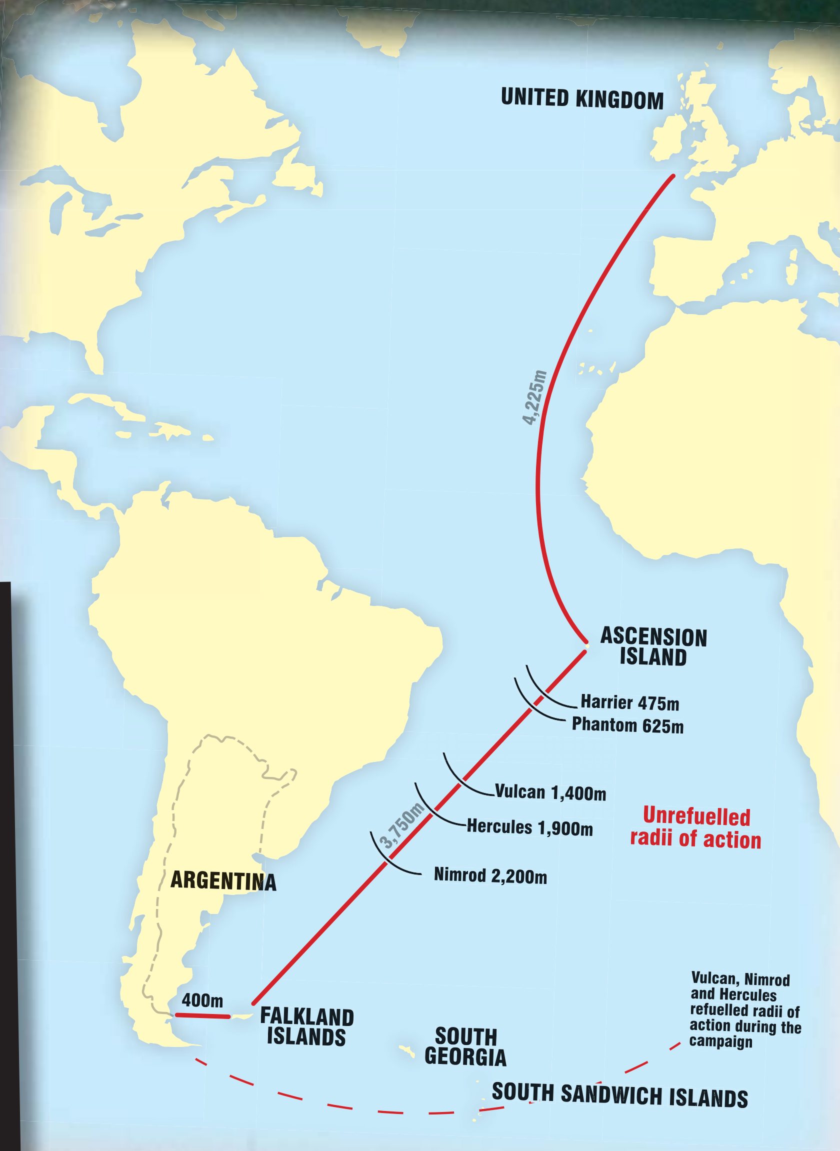
RIGHT: **Four SAS troopers parachute down to HMS *Cardiff*, from a RAF C-130 Hercules, whilst the Type 42 Destroyer was en route to the South Atlantic on 25 May 1982.**

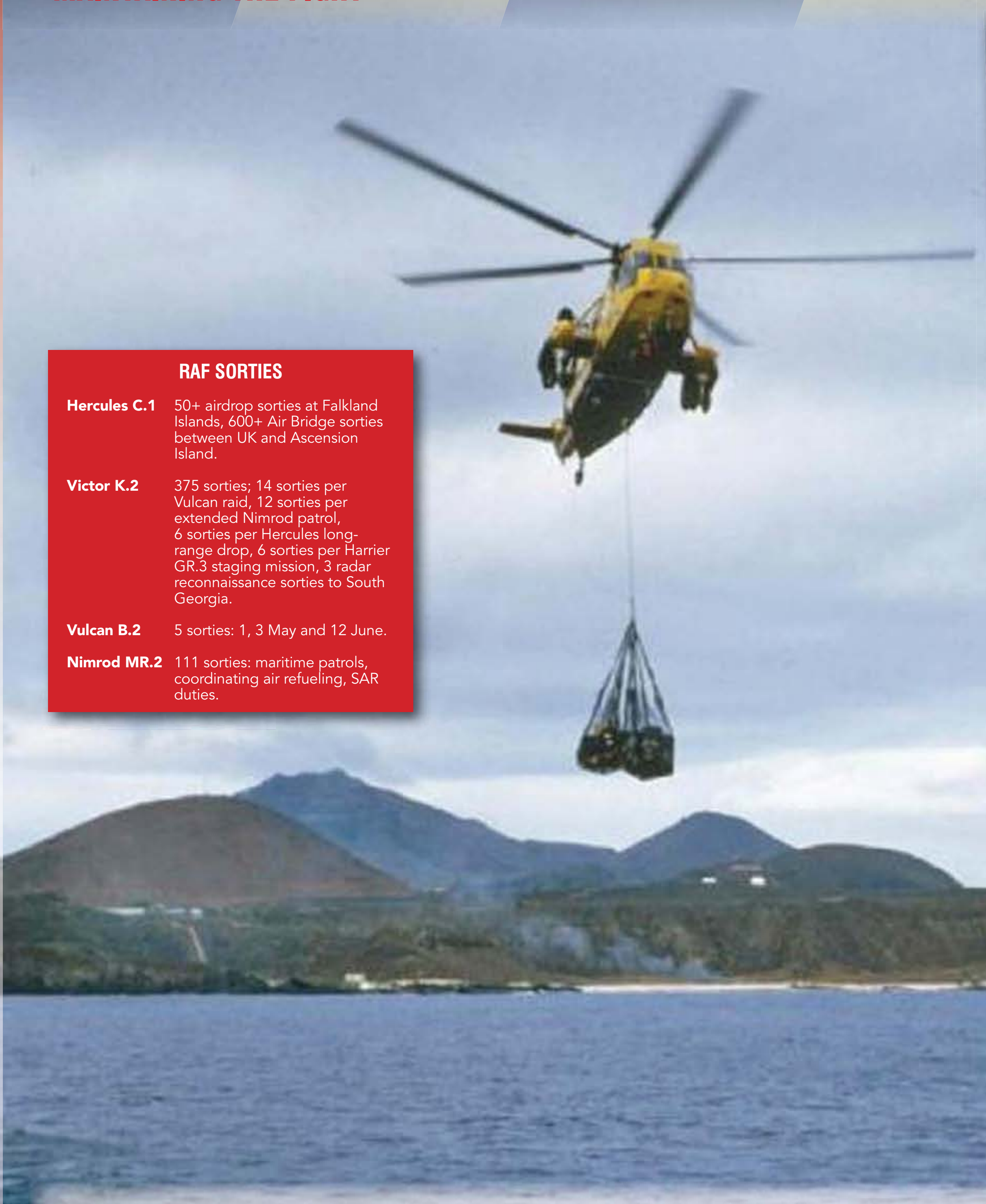
FAR RIGHT: **A map showing the general route of the Air Bridge between the UK and the South Atlantic, along with the approximate radii of action of the main RAF aircraft involved.**

BOTTOM: **RAF C-130 Hercules transports at Wideawake between between April and June 1982.** (Courtesy of Bob Shackleton, via Gordon Smith, Naval-History.Net)

At the time, Hercules XV200 was already on the factory floor undergoing a major overhaul, so it was decided this would be the prototype airframe. The probe was to be mounted on top of the fuselage above the cockpit, offset slightly to starboard, while the necessary plumbing was faired-in along the fuselage roof to the trailing edge of the starboard wing root.

The work was completed within ten days and the aircraft made its test flight from Cambridge on 28 April, before being flown to the Aeroplane and Armament Experimental Establishment (A&AEE) at Boscombe Down, Wiltshire the following day. Here, the aircraft undertook a series of "very quick" acceptance trials. Forty-eight hours later, XV200 was "plugging into" a Handley Page Victor tanker flown from RAF Marham for air-to-air refuelling (AAR) trials high over the Wiltshire countryside. A typical


UNITED KINGDOM
4,225m
ASCENSION ISLAND
Harrier 475m
Phantom 625m
Vulcan 1,400m
Hercules 1,900m
3,750m
Nimrod 2,200m
Unrefuelled radii of action
ARGENTINA
400m
FALKLAND ISLANDS
SOUTH GEORGIA
Vulcan, Nimrod and Hercules refuelled radii of action during the campaign
SOUTH SANDWICH ISLANDS



RAF SORTIES

Hercules C.1	50+ airdrop sorties at Falkland Islands, 600+ Air Bridge sorties between UK and Ascension Island.
Victor K.2	375 sorties; 14 sorties per Vulcan raid, 12 sorties per extended Nimrod patrol, 6 sorties per Hercules long-range drop, 6 sorties per Harrier GR.3 staging mission, 3 radar reconnaissance sorties to South Georgia.
Vulcan B.2	5 sorties: 1, 3 May and 12 June.
Nimrod MR.2	111 sorties: maritime patrols, coordinating air refueling, SAR duties.

contact was deemed to last no more than fifteen minutes to allow the C-130s tanks to be filled.

On 5 May 1982, XV200 was delivered to Lyneham for operational RAF aircrew to begin a short period of training before the Hercules left for a non-stop flight to Wideawake on 14 May. All the RAF C-130s that received this modification were designated C.1Ps. Six were completed by 14 June, allowing them to participate in Operation *Corporate*. Another ten followed after the Argentine surrender. The second airframe to pass through the conversion process was XV179, which arrived at Cambridge on 23 March and returned to Lyneham on 13 May. The following C-130s arriving for conversion were all of the LR2 configured examples, which, once probe-equipped, were referred to as PLR2s.

SPECIAL FORCES SQUADRON

Given the complex handling required during the "hook-up" to the Victor, the first air-refuelled C-130P mission was undertaken by aircrew from 47 Squadron. Code-named *Cadbury 1*, the mission was launched on 16 May.

In command of the C-130 was Flight Lieutenant H.C. Burgoyne. The remaining crew members were Flight Lieutenant R.L. Rowley (co-pilot), Flight Lieutenant J.D. Cunningham (navigator) and Flight Sergeant S.E. Solan (engineer). Harold Burgoyne was awarded the AFC as a result of his involvement in this 6,300 mile sortie, launched from Wideawake at 02.45Z. The rest of the crew received a Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air.

The outbound leg was supported by Victor K.2s XH671 (55 Squadron), XL162 (55 Squadron) and XL512 (57 Squadron). Burgoyne's AFC citation stated that 1,000lbs of stores and eight parachutists were successfully dropped to HMS *Antelope* within the Total Exclusion Zone. The Hercules landed back on Wideawake's runway at 02.50Z on 17 May.

Having proven the feasibility of supplying the Royal Navy at sea, the air-dropping of supplies to the Task Force was quickly passed onto the "regular" C-130 squadrons. One of the pilots involved was Tim Collins, now a Captain with Virgin Atlantic Airways. He takes up the story:

"I was serving with 70 Squadron at the time the Argentines invaded South Georgia. Our squadron was deployed to Gibraltar as part of NATO *Exercise Springtrain*. We were tasked

with supporting the Buccaneers of 12 Squadron. So, effectively, we had all the kit we needed already with our aircraft. We were instructed to return to RAF Lyneham as quickly as possible in order to prepare for possible operations in the South Atlantic.

"Back at Lyneham, our crew was given twenty-four hours' notice on what was effectively our first transport flight in support of Operation *Corporate*. We left on 3 April and flew down to RNAS Yeovilton, Somerset, to pick up helicopter and Sea Harrier spare parts which hadn't reached the fleet in time when it had left port.

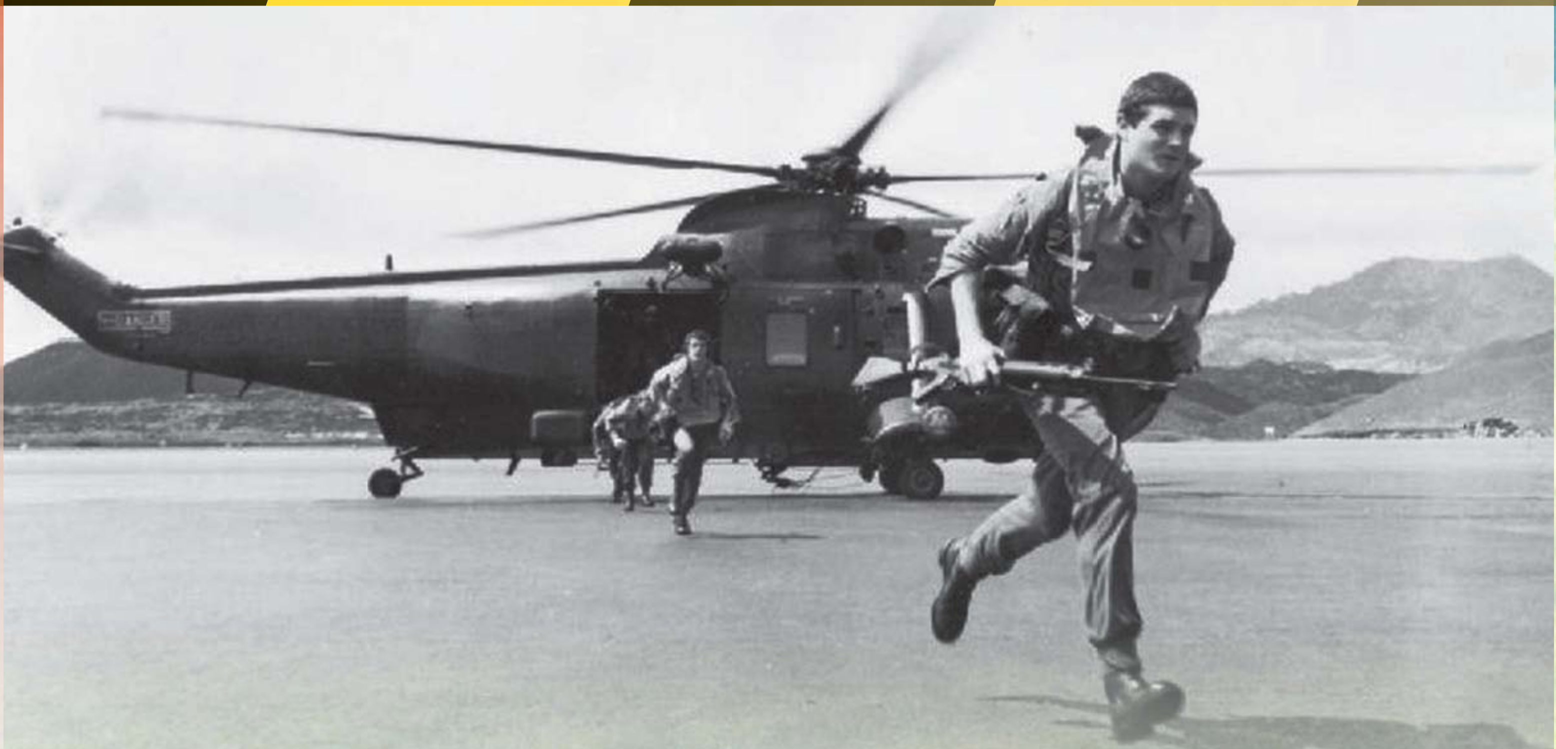
"From there we flew on to Gibraltar, after which we had a few days waiting to continue our flight down to Ascension Island (ASI). This was in effect the start of the Falklands Air Bridge proper for us. My first flight down to ASI was on 8 April and when we arrived … there was still a peacetime look about the place. We were effectively greeted as emissaries from the Motherland and treated to as much beer and food as we wanted in the Two Boats Club. However, when I next

FACING PAGE: **An RAF Air Sea Rescue Sea King helicopter transports an under-slung load at Ascension Island shortly after the Argentine surrender, 19 June 1982.** (Glenn Sands Collection)

ABOVE LEFT: **Westland Scout helicopters, and, in the background, Sea Kings, pictured at Wideawake Airfield on Ascension Island during the relocation of machines and equipment towards the Falklands.** (Glenn Sands Collection)

ABOVE RIGHT: **The flight deck of a RAF VC 10 aircraft on a flight from Ascension Island to the United Kingdom after the Argentine surrender in 1982. RAF Hercules and VC10 transport aircraft flew over 500 sorties to transport more than 5,000 people and 6,000 tons of freight during the Falklands Conflict.** (Glenn Sands Collection)

BELOW: **Taken between 20 April and 6 May 1982, this picture shows a Sea King involved in the redistribution of military equipment at Ascension Island delivering a 105mm howitzer of 29 Commando Regiment Royal Artillery to Wideawake Airfield.** (Glenn Sands Collection)



flew into ASI on 21 April, everything had changed and we were living in hastily-erected tents alongside the onward deploying army units."

Although short-notice, the deployment of the RAF's C-130s meant the aircrews could finally use some of the unique capabilities they had learnt in training.

"In the early days most of the C-130 fleet were used simply as straightforward air transports shuttling a multitude of kit to the closest airfields in the area [ASI]," continued Tom Collins. "But on 21 April, which was my first flight south of ASI, we did our first airdrop to the Naval Task Force. HMS *Invincible* required some urgent spares for its aircraft so it was down to us to get them there. Dropping to ships was part of our skills set but it was something we had practised rarely until now.

"We were briefed on the flight to rendezvous with *Invincible* that an Argentine Air Force 707 may be in the area collecting intelligence on the progress of the Task Force. We were warned that *Invincible*'s Sea Harriers might be scrambled to intercept the intruder at any time, so we had to keep a careful look out when flying close to the ship. They didn't scramble that day.

"But, during out next airdrop the following day, to HMS *Hermes*, we had to abort our run in and orbit some distance from the carrier. An unidentified contact was approaching the Task Force. It turned out to be a Nimrod which hadn't correctly deployed the necessary security codes which were to verify it as friendly. The radio message we received direct from Admiral Sandy Woodward to relay back to the Nimrod Operations Room back in ASI upon our return was most certainly not friendly!"

Additional upgrades continued to be introduced to the C-130 fleet at a rapid pace. Along with the hastily installed extra fuel tanks, Omega long-range navigation kits were installed – universally greeted with a "sigh of relief" by the C-130s crews who now had some added insurance whilst operating over the vast expanse of the South Atlantic.

However, problems continued for the aircraft involved on the Air Bridge, mainly as a result of the unpredictable weather. Collins explains:

"I recall one Hercules crew having what we call a 'quadruple hush' on the way back to the UK. All four engines stopped whilst in flight! Upon landing, back at Lyneham, all the C-130 squadrons revised their water drain check procedures as the constant travelling from hot to cold climates was producing a huge amount of condensation in the tanks, leading in this case, it was

ABOVE: Royal Marines of 40 Commando practise exiting from a Sea King helicopter at Wideawake Airfield during the two weeks they spent training and reorganising at Ascension Island, April 1982. (Glenn Sands Collection)

FAR RIGHT: A pilot's view of the final approach to Wideawake – note the hills surrounding the runway. Prior to the conflict, Wideawake only handled a few movements each week, mainly serving the US satellite and missile tracking facilities, South African submarine cable and British satellite relay stations. American-controlled and, at the time, operated by Pan American Airways, British aircraft normally had to give twenty-four hours' notice of use of Wideawake, but during the war this requirement was waived. (Courtesy of Chris Goss)

BACKGROUND IMAGE: A RAF F-4 Phantom operating from Ascension in the aftermath of the Falklands War. (Courtesy of Chris Goss)

BELOW: A series of images showing one of the RAF's Victor K.2 tankers landing at Wideawake, during the development of the Air Bridge, at some point between April and June 1982. (Courtesy of Bob Shackleton, via Gordon Smith, Naval-History.Net)

believed, to fuel waxing and blocked filters, causing all four engines to quit!

"The weather was always on our minds as operating around ASI could provide some nasty tricks without notice. Heavy showers or low cloud over the airfield were constant and unpredictable problems – and we rarely had fuel to go anywhere else when we arrived over the field. Additionally, poor weather within the air-to-air refuelling areas made life more difficult than we'd have liked, which led to some close calls on occasions and some keen pairs of eyes constantly monitoring the fuel gauges on the flight deck at times."

There were to be plenty of challenging flights performed by the aircrews of the C-130s, but by far the most worthwhile for Tim Collins occurred shortly after hostilities had finished:

"On 18/19 June 1982, my crew flew an airdrop sortie to Sapper Hill drop zone (DZ), just near Port Stanley. The weather at the DZ was awful, but we had on board the first mail the troops would have received since they left the comfort of the Royal Navy ships, so we were keen to succeed.

"We managed to get a headwind on both legs of the flight, had done well on the inflight refuelling and had plenty of fuel – so much so that we ended the flight with an impromptu fight against one of the recently deployed F-4 Phantoms off ASI. By the time we landed we'd been airborne just over twenty-eight hours, a record for a RAF Hercules."

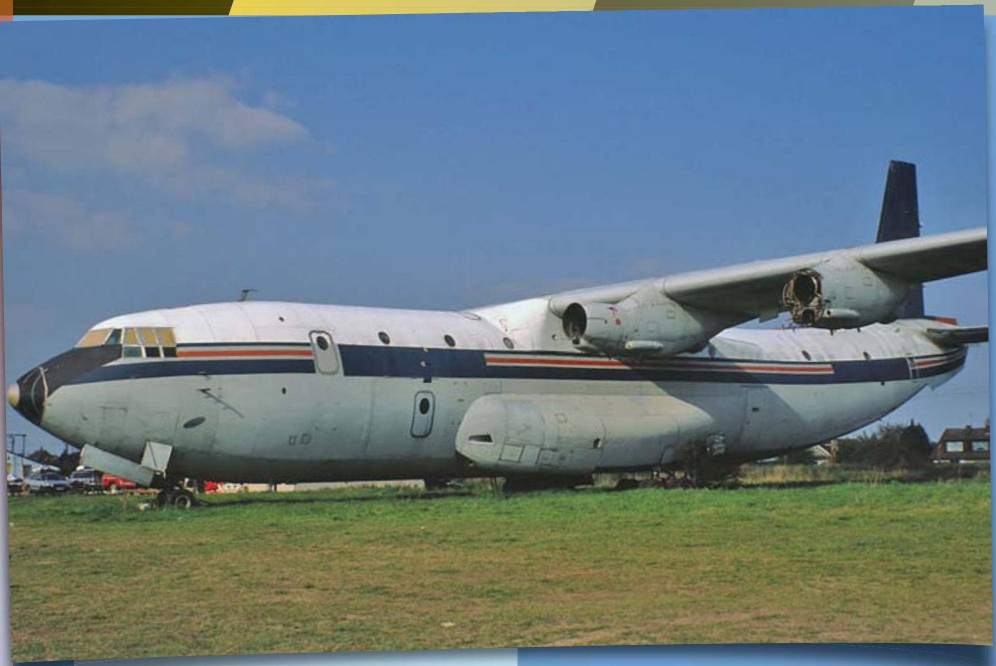
> **"By the time we landed we'd been airborne just over twenty-eight hours."**

CIVILIAN SUPPORT

Wideawake Airfield on Ascension Island was not only home to military traffic during Operation *Corporate*. Of the 535 inbound air transport movements, a small but significant portion of the 6,000 tons of freight delivered to the South Atlantic staging post was flown in by chartered civilian aircraft.

British Airways Boeing 707s flew into Wideawake from RAF Marham on 18 April at the start of a succession of supply flights. Initial deliveries were ground support equipment for the Victor tanker squadrons that followed the 707s down south.

However, by

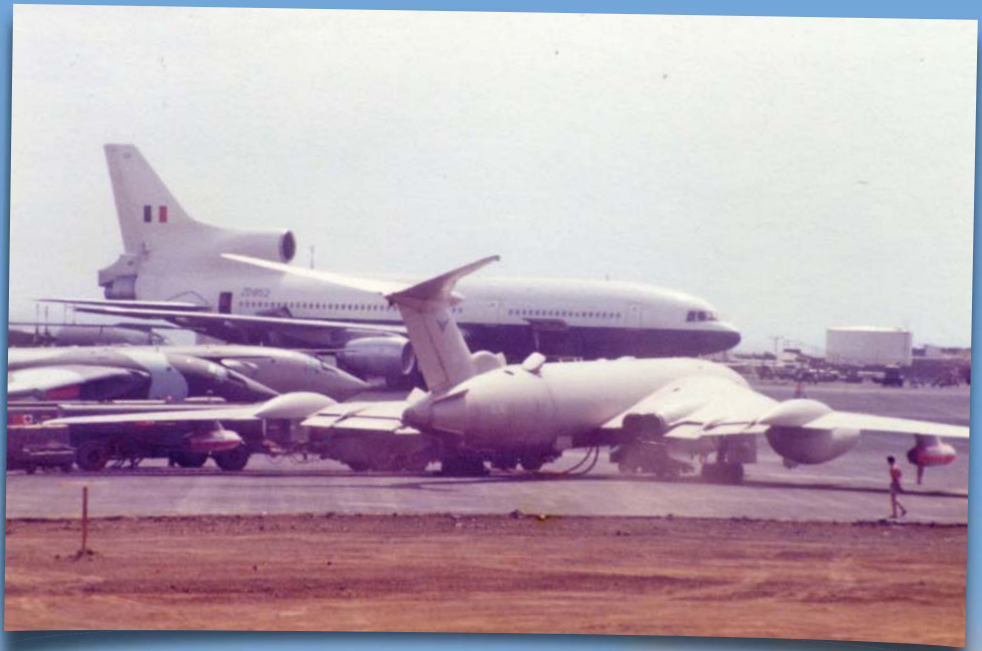


ABOVE: **This Short Belfast, G-BEPE, was first of the ex-RAF examples of this strategic freighter pressed into service during the civilian involvement in the Air Bridge. It is seen here at Southend prior to its demolition. All ten RAF Short Belfasts were named and G-BEPE was *Samson*. It carried the RAF serial XR362.** (Courtesy of David Oates)

far the biggest contribution in terms of civilian transport support was by Heavylift Cargo Airlines whose three recently delivered ex-RAF Short Belfast strategic freighters were immediately pressed into service.

The first Belfast to arrive at ASI was G-BEPE on 4 April. It contained two Wessex helicopters collected from Yeovilton the day before. Over the following two months, a succession of *Corporate* charters were performed by the cargo airline and these were to continue after the Argentine surrender on 14 June. By the end of October 1982, a regular service had commenced through RAF Brize Norton via Dakar. Several of the returning Heavylift flights back to the UK brought home the Harrier GR.3s of 1(F) Squadron to RAF Wittering.

But it was clear to all those involved in the conflict that, much like the Naval Task Force needed the assistance of the British Merchant Fleet to sustain its operational effectiveness, so did the Air Bridge. Despite the remarkable work of the RAF aircrews, the MoD had to acknowledge the short-sighted original decision to disband many of the transport squadrons that could have played a significant part in the conflict. ■



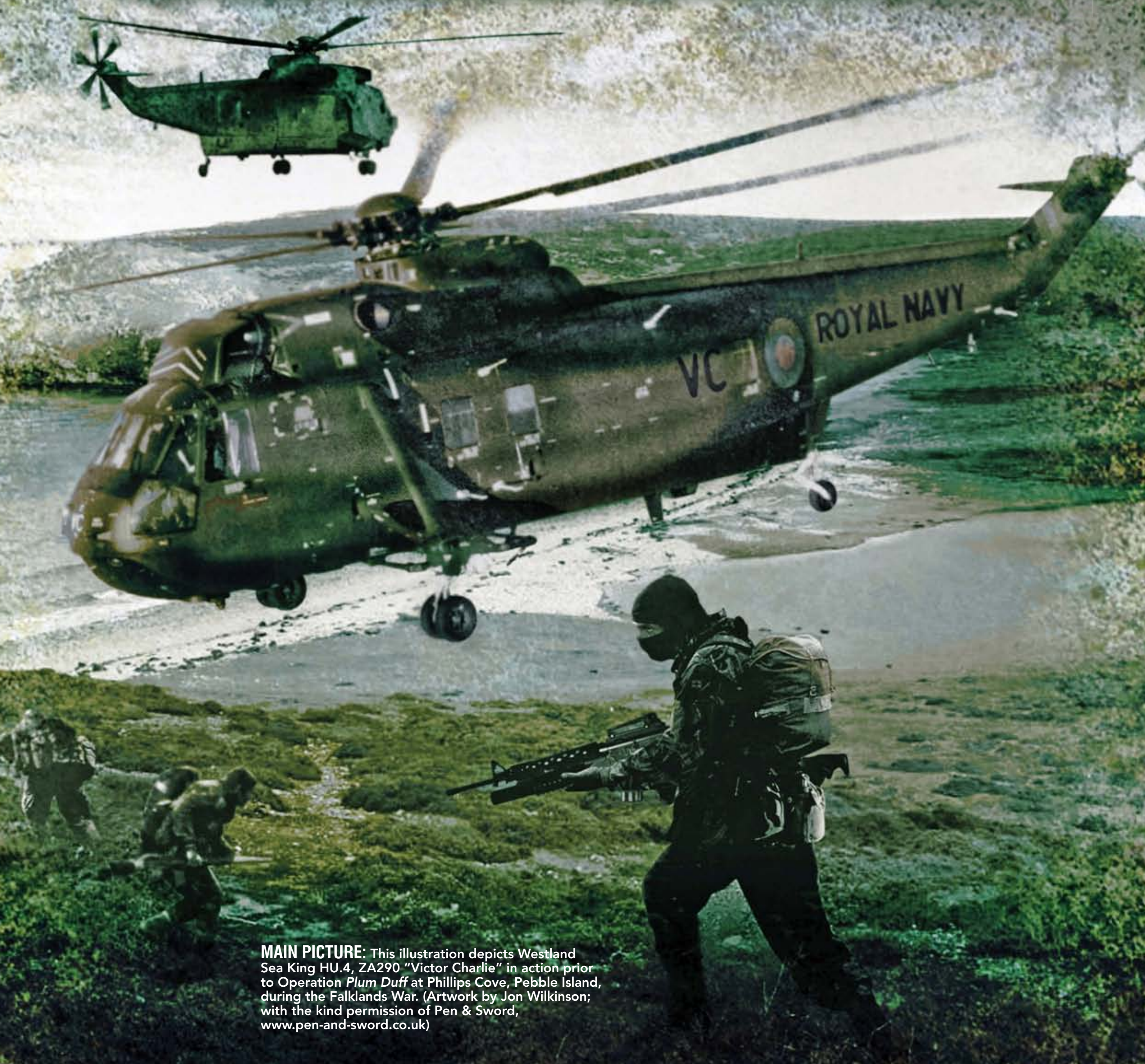
RIGHT: **A RAF Lockheed L-1011 TriStar KC1 tanker, serial ZD952, at Wideawake, surrounded by Victor K.2 tankers, in 1984. It was the introduction of the Air Bridge that ultimately led to the development of the TriStar tankers as the demands of refueling aircraft such as the C-130 Hercules rapidly used up the fatigue life of the RAF's Victors. Introduced in 1984, the RAF would eventually operate nine TriStar KC1s – all ex-civilian airliners (six from British Airways and three from Pan-Am).** (Courtesy of Chris Goss)

Air Seychelles
FOD
THE RESPONSIBILITY IS YOURS
KEEP THIS AREA CLEAN

BELOW: **The Air Bridge is, in a much-revised form, still in operation today. This view of Wideawake Airfield, taken in November 2011, shows passengers disembarking from an Air Seychelles' aircraft. The latter was operating under a contract with the UK's Ministry of Defence as part of the continuing airlink between RAF Brize Norton in Oxfordshire and RAF Mount Pleasant in the Falkland Islands. The twice-weekly service is now operated by Titan Airways who operate Boeing 767s. Left of centre is Green Mountain, the island's highest summit.** (Courtesy of Vincent van Zeijst)

OPERATION CERTAIN DEATH

It was one of the most mysterious events of the Falklands War and was for many years shrouded in secrecy and controversy. Now the man at the heart of the incident, the pilot of Westland Sea King HC.4 ZA290, Richard Hutchings, explains to Stephen Taylor what really happened.



MAIN PICTURE: This illustration depicts Westland Sea King HU.4, ZA290 "Victor Charlie" in action prior to Operation *Plum Duff* at Phillips Cove, Pebble Island, during the Falklands War. (Artwork by Jon Wilkinson; with the kind permission of Pen & Sword, www.pen-and-sword.co.uk)

ABOVE LEFT: **Lieutenant Richard Hutchings at the controls of "Victor Charlie". Hutchings was commissioned into the Royal Marines in 1973. Following two periods of Commando service and an appointment in the Ministry of Defence, he completed his flying training before joining 846 Naval Air Squadron, Fleet Air Arm, in 1979. Besides taking part in the *Sheffield* rescue effort, Hutchings had already flown several Special Forces teams into the Falklands, as well as helping capture the Argentine intelligence-gathering trawler *Narwhal*.** (All images with the kind permission of Colonel Richard Hutchings, unless stated otherwise)

ABOVE RIGHT: **HMS *Hermes* at sea on her way south. Here, some of the crew are undertaking "Huffers and Puffers" – a daily event until leaving Ascension Island.** (With the kind permission of David Balchin)

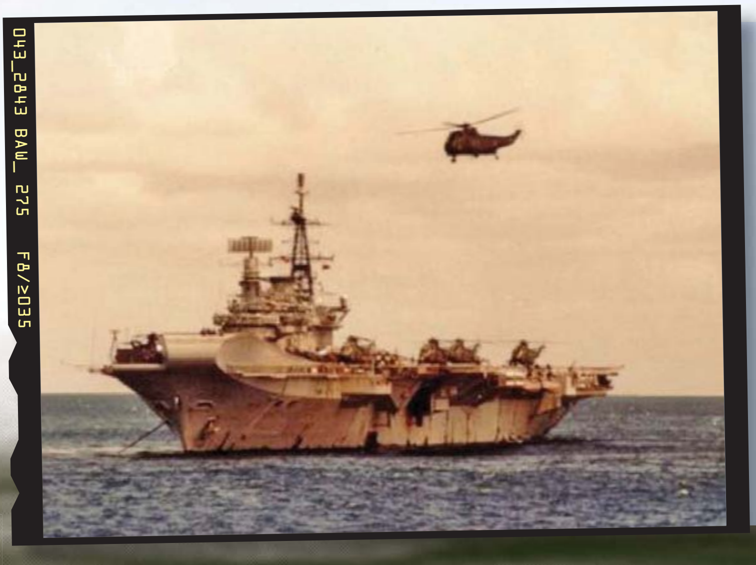
On 26 May 1982, three men in hastily acquired civilian clothing gave a press conference to the world's media in a packed reception room at the British Embassy in the Chilean capital, Santiago. The three were the crew of an 846 Naval Air Squadron Westland Sea King HC.4 helicopter (serial number ZA290 and coded VC) that had been operating from the aircraft carrier HMS *Invincible*.

A few days earlier they had landed near the small coastal town of Punta Arenas in the extreme south of Chile.[1] Reading from a prepared statement, one of the men, the Royal Marine pilot, Lieutenant Richard Hutchings, explained that his helicopter had developed a malfunction whilst on a routine patrol, forcing him to divert to Chile. Not a word of the statement, however, was true.

*

Just after 11.00 hours on 4 May 1982, an Exocet missile struck and sank the Type 42 destroyer HMS *Sheffield*. The attack sent shockwaves through the Task Force. If either of the two British aircraft carriers, *Hermes* or *Invincible*, were to suffer a similar fate then the retaking of the Falkland Islands would be much more difficult, if not impossible. It was soon discovered that Argentina possessed at least three more of the deadly missiles. Something would have to be done to eliminate what was now seen as the greatest threat to the entire expedition.

Codenamed Operation *Mikado*, the proposed solution was to fly two RAF Lockheed C-130 Hercules transport 'planes, loaded with some fifty-five heavily armed SAS personnel, and land them directly onto the runway at the Rio Grande air base in Argentina's southern Tierra del Fuego region. Intelligence suggested that this airfield was the home of the Argentine naval air arm's Exocet-equipped Super Étendards.



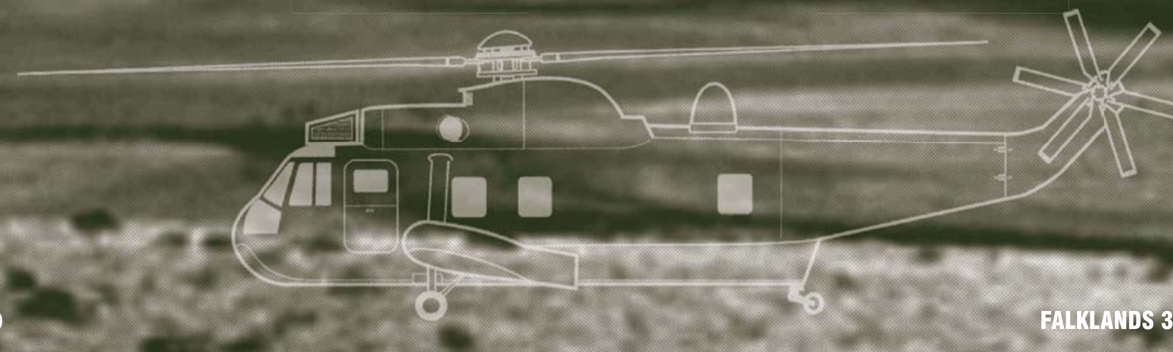
LEFT: **HMS *Hermes*, with a number of Westland Sea King's present, pictured off Ascension Island. The Westland Sea King HU.4 – as used during Operation *Plum Duff* – was also known as the Westland Commando. During the planning for the operation, there had been some reluctance on the part of the Royal Marines for a valuable HU.4 variant to be used in the mission. With only a few examples of this Sea King variant available – at the time the raid was being considered, a previous loss meant that there were only thirteen in the South Atlantic – the Royal Marines suggested that an ASW Sea King II be substituted instead. The unsuitability of the latter for such a clandestine mission as *Plum Duff* meant that the Royal Marines were overruled.**

Once on the ground, the British troops would then destroy any enemy aircraft and Exocet missiles they encountered. Those SAS troopers who survived the assault would then make their way on foot to neighbouring Chile. Though technically neutral, Chile's long-standing enmity with Argentina meant that the former was secretly aiding the British war effort.

Perhaps not surprisingly, when the plan was presented to the SAS men by their commander, Brigadier Peter de la Billière, it was immediately dubbed "Operation Certain Death" by many. And when the first SAS officer chosen to lead the assault pointed out that *Mikado* was effectively a suicide mission, he was promptly replaced.

Nevertheless, and despite the enormous political risks of taking direct military action against the Argentine mainland, the threat to the Task Force from the Exocets was judged to outweigh the drawbacks. The operation was given the green light.

But if *Mikado* was to have even the slimmest chance of success an initial visual reconnaissance of the ground at Rio Grande would have to be carried out, not least to confirm that the Super Étendards were in fact based there and to gauge the strength of the defences at the air base. To that end the somewhat



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ROYAL NAVY
VC

ABOVE: **Westland Sea King HU.4, ZA290 "Victor Charlie" – the helicopter crewed by Lieutenant Richard Hutchings RM, Lieutenant Alan Bennett and Leading Aircrewman Peter Imrie during Operation *Plum Duff*.**

BELOW RIGHT: **Taken in 1997, this image shows an area of Tierra del Fuego, north of Rio Grande, which was part of the route flown by Lieutenant Hutchings during Operation *Plum Duff*.**

MAIN PICTURE: **The area close to where the men of the SAS were eventually dropped off from "Victor Charlie" by Lieutenant Richard Hutchings.**

eccentrically named Operation *Plum Duff* was devised.

This would entail a Sea King helicopter from the Task Force making a hazardous long-range flight across the South Atlantic to Tierra del Fuego carrying a nine-man SAS patrol. Once landed, their task was to set up a covert observation post and monitor activity on the Rio Grande air base, radioing intelligence back to the British commanders. If the opportunity presented itself, the SAS patrol was to destroy the Super Étendards.

It would be a one-way mission for the crew of the Sea King as the helicopter would not be able to carry enough fuel to return to the Task Force. Once they had dropped off the SAS team, they would fly on to neutral Chile and, after hiding out for a week to disguise the true purpose of their mission, they would hand themselves in to the Chilean authorities.

With the planned landings of British forces on the Falklands to retake the islands scheduled for 21 May, during which period the British ships would be at their most vulnerable to Exocet attack, there was no time to lose.

Volunteers were requested to fly the SAS in. Lieutenant Richard Hutchings RM put himself forward. Once chosen, Lieutenant Alan Bennett (known as "Wiggy") and Leading Aircrewman Pete Imrie completed his crew.

The dangers the men faced were enormous. The Argentine Air Force had a squadron of Mirage jet fighters stationed in the south of the country, ready to intercept any intruders, as well as numerous radar-controlled anti-aircraft guns. The distances involved were also huge. So just getting a fully-laden Sea King to the target area would present a formidable challenge.

It was also clear to Hutchings that the SAS team itself was deeply split over the viability of *Plum Duff*. "As time went on", reveals Hutchings, "it became apparent that there was some unease within the team about aspects of the mission. Having heard a number of disagreements which caused me concern, I felt that before departure I had to share my observations with Captain 'A' [first name Andy, the SAS officer in command of the mission] and the Captain of HMS *Invincible* as to their apparent disquiet. I could not help but think that the operation was destined to get off to an inauspicious start."[2]

*

Under the cover of darkness, and protected by a screen of escorting warships, HMS *Invincible*, escorted by the Type 22 frigate HMS *Broadsword*, had steamed west and as close to the South American coast as her captain dared. Just fifteen minutes after midnight on 18 May 1982, with the SAS soldiers embarked, the Sea King rose from the flight deck and disappeared into the moonless night.

Flying at an altitude of little more than fifty feet in order to avoid radar detection, the flight was uneventful. But as they neared the jagged coastline of Tierra del Fuego, things started to go wrong. Thick fog began to close in. Even with the aid of their night vision goggles, navigating in the murk became difficult. Then, suddenly, a bright light lit up the sky a few miles ahead of them.

"Initially unable to make out its form, I continued flying on the same heading, but slowed the aircraft to sixty knots," recalled Hutchings. "When approximately four miles away I realized to my horror that the light was a long flame, a flare burning from the end of a tower on an exploratory gas platform; we had stumbled across an Argentine offshore gas field."

A detour was required to avoid being seen by those on the platform, which would further cut into their dwindling fuel. More bad luck followed, and by the time the helicopter made landfall the fog had worsened considerably.

"The visibility deteriorated rapidly with each passing mile," continued Hutchings. "I knew that it would not be long before I would run out of external visual references by which to fly the aircraft. Climbing the aircraft above the layer of fog would have exposed us to detection by the radar known to be at Rio Grande and was, therefore, not an option. Fast running out of ideas and options I landed the aircraft in the certain knowledge that it would be my last opportunity to make a safe landing whilst remaining in full control."

The planned drop-off point for the Special Forces team had been a point close to an isolated estancia twelve miles to the north-west of the Rio Grande airbase. In the increasingly adverse weather and deteriorating visibility Hutchings put his aircraft down seven miles short of the designated drop zone, in the vicinity of an isolated farm called Cerro Sección Miranda, Tierra del Fuego. In the circumstances this was a fine achievement by the crew of the Sea King.

The SAS Captain had been listening and talking to the Sea King's crew throughout the flight. As they landed he

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ABOVE LEFT: **The area south of Punta Arenas over which the aircrew walked from 18-25 May 1982. This photograph was taken from "The Hill" in November 1982.**

ABOVE RIGHT: **A shot that shows the view through the type of night vision goggles used during Operation *Plum Duff*. This shot was taken by Richard Hutchings at Yuma, Arizona, in November 1987 whilst he was flying a United States Marine Corps Bell AH-1 Cobra attack helicopter.**

BELOW: **Fleet Air Arm helicopters, a single Westland Wessex and two Westland Sea Kings, at work around HMS *Hermes* during her deployment to the South Atlantic. Before embarking on the flight to Argentina on 17 May 1982, two helicopters had transferred from HMS *Hermes* to HMS *Invincible*. Alongside "Victor Charlie" there was the reserve helicopter, Sea King ZA292. Once Hutchings had taken off, *Invincible* and *Broadsword* headed back to join the rest of the Task Force. ZA292 returned to HMS *Hermes* later on the 18th.** (With the kind permission of Dave Morgan)

moved up to the front of the helicopter so that Wiggy Bennett could point out to him their exact location on the map. After a few moments Captain 'A' announced that he was aborting the mission.

The SAS leader said that he did not have any confidence in the aircraft being exactly where Wiggy declared it to be. The SAS officer felt that in not being certain where he was, the risks had become too great. Captain 'A' refused to accept that the grid reference of their position was accurate, despite the helicopter's navigation equipment having been updated on a known landmark only fifteen minutes earlier. Despite the Fleet Air Arm crew's "best endeavours" to persuade him to the contrary, Captain 'A' therefore decided to abort the mission and asked Hutchings to fly him and his men to Chile.

Captain 'A' broke the news to his men, three of whom had already stepped down from the Sea King on to Argentine soil. "I'm sorry", he shouted, "it's Chile after all". With these words, the daring strike against the Argentine airbase came to an end.

The troopers re-embarked and the Sea King lifted off once again. The danger, however, was far from over. They were still in enemy territory, their fuel was critically low and visibility was near zero. The priority now was to cross into Chile as soon as possible, before the Argentines discovered their presence.

Shortly after Hutchings took off, as he was forced to climb to a higher altitude to pass over the Carmen de Silva mountain range separating southern Argentina from Chile, the Sea King's radar warning receiver began to squawk insistently in the crews' headphones, alerting them to the fact that they had been detected by hostile radar. They could only pray that the Argentines at Rio Grande would dismiss the radar contact as one of their own aircraft.

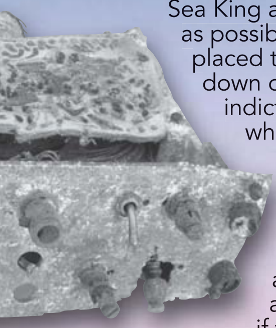
"The aircraft had been detected, the Argentineans at Rio Grande knew that there was a slow-moving aircraft flying on an opening vector from the area of the air base," noted Hutchings. "The tension in the aircraft was characterised by our near silence. Our long transit from *Invincible* to the Argentine coast had been quite a chatty affair, but now our silence was punctuated by essential dialogue only. All the time, we were close to being mesmerized by the radar pulses loud and clear in our headsets."

Several terrifying minutes later, during which the crew feared being blown out of the sky at any moment by a surface-to-air missile, the Sea King finally crossed into Chilean airspace. The helicopter's fuel state was by now perilously low.

During the planning of the operation three potential locations for landing and destroying the helicopter had been selected. Which of these would actually be chosen by the helicopter crew would

ABOVE LEFT: The wreckage of "Victor Charlie" on the small beach at Agua Fresca, some eleven miles south of Punta Arenas in southern Chile, 20 May 1982. Once the helicopter had landed, Hutchings and Bennett set about destroying the night vision goggles using boulders on the beach, throwing the smashed remains into the sea. The Sea King itself was then doused in petrol, two gallons of which had been carried by the crew for their cooker, and the two delayed explosive devices thrown into the cabin – all of which were followed up by a couple of lit distress flares. Within seconds the aircraft was ablaze; two minutes later the charges exploded.

ABOVE RIGHT: The Chilean authorities burying the wreckage of "Victor Charlie". Despite the fire which ravaged the helicopter, when the scene was visited by the press before the remains were disposed of, one of the Sea King's serial numbers could still be seen – identifying the helicopter to the world as being British.



LEFT: A souvenir from "Victor Charlie", recovered in 1990, which is now in the possession of Richard Hutchings. This is fact the Sea King's CASS box.

BELOW: The crew of "Victor Charlie" pictured with members of the Carabineros de Chile. Lieutenant Richard Hutchings RM can be seen third from the left.

be dictated by a combination of factors, including the amount of fuel available at the time and visual observation. As it transpired, fuel was the determining factor.

It was agreed that the SAS should be dropped off first, to make their escape separately, and then Hutchings would find a safe place to land and destroy the Sea King as far from the SAS team as possible. When Hutchings placed the helicopter firmly down on Chilean soil, he indicted to the SAS Captain where they now were. Captain 'A' agreed that this was the best of the three proposed landing spots as it was the only one which afforded direct land access to Argentina, if that should later be required.

After the SAS had disembarked, Hutchings flew on until he found a secluded beach at Agua Fresca, some eleven miles from the town of Punta Arenas, to set his aircraft down.

In the original planning for the mission it had been decided that the helicopter would be ditched in deep water. After chopping holes in the aircraft fuselage with an axe and survival knife, Hutchings took the aircraft out to sea and dropped it gently onto a flat sea, his aim being then to swim ashore. But so calm was the water, the Sea King refused to sink. Hutchings had no choice but to fly the helicopter back to the beach and destroy the machine, along with all the sensitive equipment, with explosives and fuel.

For the next eight days the three men made their way slowly towards Punta Arenas, using all the escape and evasion techniques they had been taught to avoid Chilean patrols as they went. Hutchings had been instructed to somehow make contact with the British Embassy in Santiago, though quite how he was supposed to do this had not been explained. Finally, on 25 May 1982, cold and hungry, they decided to give themselves up to the Chileans.

The three bedraggled Fleet Air Arm aircrew strolled nonchalantly up to the regional HQ of the country's paramilitary police force, the Carabineros de Chile. As they walked past the camp's main gate, unchallenged by the disinterested sentry, they made their way up a side road. As they did so, a car passed by, only to pull up just behind them. As the occupant of the car asked Hutchings and his colleagues in Spanish if they were the three British airmen, they attempted to maintain their charade by announcing that they were crewmen from a British merchant ship in the port.

Captain Marcos Moya Torres, a Carabineros officer, seemed unimpressed with their explanation. "There are no British merchant ships in the port", he replied bluntly. "You are the British airmen". The game was up.

The Carabineros had already discovered the smouldering, burnt-out wreckage of the Sea King several days earlier, so the men's appearance in Punta Arenas came as no surprise. A good-natured interrogation by a commander of the Chilean Navy followed, in which Hutchings stuck to the cover story of having suffered mechanical problems, forcing him to land in Chile – though the Chilean clearly suspected there was more to the story.

"During the questioning he asked me to confirm on three occasions that we had not dropped off any military personnel on Chilean soil," remembers Hutchings. "I answered that we had not dropped off any military personnel. He put a hypothesis to me that we had dropped off Special Forces either in Argentina or Chile and had then destroyed the aircraft as part of the plan. I assured him that this was not the case. He seemed to accept my version of events."

The men were then quietly handed over to British Embassy officials in Santiago, from whom they learned that the SAS team was also safe. At

the request of the Chilean authorities a press conference was hastily arranged in which Hutchings delivered a prepared statement. In this he again repeated the story given to the Chilean authorities: "Whilst on sea patrol we experienced an engine failure. Due to adverse weather conditions it was not possible to return to our ship in this condition. We therefore sought refuge in the nearest neutral country".

The press was not convinced. With speculation intensifying, that same day the three men were hurriedly flown out of the country by embassy officials.

In the years since the operation, Hutchings has discovered just how lucky he and the others onboard "Victor Charlie" had been:

"Over the years I have struck up acquaintances with a number of former conscripts, professional soldiers and marines whose role in 1982 was the defence of the airfields and aviation fuel storage tanks in Patagonia. I now know the detailed dispositions of Argentine troop deployments across that region during the war.

"As we skirted north around the gas platform in the Carena field, our aircraft was detected by one of two Argentine frigates patrolling close to the coast and no more than three miles away from 'Victor Charlie'. The performance of our rather rudimentary first generation radar warning receiver was poor and was unable to detect the ship's radar propagation. The ship could not engage us because of our close proximity to the gas platform. Then, as we flew south across San Sebastian Bay we came within a quarter of a mile of an aviation fuel dump which was heavily defended by a company of marines. They heard the aircraft, but thanks to the fog could not see it – just as well because we were well within the range of their weapons. It also transpires that the intended landing location was defended by a company of marines – a landing there would have probably resulted in the helicopter's destruction. In addition, there were frequent patrols of the surrounding area by foot, vehicle and helicopter.

"The Argentines had the Patagonian coastal area sown up pretty tight utilising infantry, armour, artillery, engineers, aviation assets and warships. Attempts to disrupt Argentine air operations through acts of sabotage at the airfields and fuel stocks by our Special Forces had been long anticipated by the Argentine military planners and around 10,000 troops were assigned to the defence of the area. There was no intelligence available to the Task Force of any of the military defences and activity in Patagonia – we were flying blind."

The failure of *Plum Duff* convinced the British commanders that Operation *Mikado*, the full-scale airborne assault on the Rio Grande air base, was no longer a practical proposition. The plan was quietly dropped.

Tragically, the deadly threat posed by the Exocet was underlined on 25 May, when Super Étendards operating out of Rio Grande scored another success, sinking the large container ship *Atlantic Conveyor*. However, it could have been even worse. This Exocet is believed to have first locked on to HMS *Invincible*, which was in the same area, but at the last moment was decoyed away by "chaff" – strips of aluminium foil fired into the air to confuse the missile's onboard radar.

With hindsight, however, it was just as well that the mission to destroy the Super Étendards and their Exocet missiles had been cancelled. After the war, it was discovered that the Rio Grande base had been defended by no less than four battalions of well-trained marines – far more than the SAS had anticipated. At the same time, the Super Étendards aircraft had been moved, in early May, to fortified revetments positioned along the coastal highway, each heavily defended.

If *Mikado* had gone ahead, the sardonic nickname given to the operation by members of the elite unit, "Certain Death", may well have proven to be all too accurate. ■

Lieutenant Richard Hutchings' own account of his service in the South Atlantic in 1982, including his part in Operation *Plum Duff*, is told in *Special Forces Pilot: A Flying Memoir of the Falklands War*, which is published by Pen & Sword. For more information or to order a copy, visit: www.pen-and-sword.co.uk

ABOVE LEFT and RIGHT: The press conference at the British Embassy in Santiago, the Chilean capital, on 26 May 1982. Lieutenant Richard Hutchings, also seen above right, is second from the right.

BELOW: HMS *Invincible*, the warship from which Operation *Plum Duff* was launched from a position close to Beuchene Island, approximately thirty miles due south of East Falkland, returns to a rapturous welcome at Portsmouth in September 1982.

BELOW RIGHT: For his part in the operations in the South Atlantic, it was announced in the Falklands Honours List that Lieutenant Richard Hutchings had been awarded a Distinguished Service Cross. He is seen here, with his family, at the investiture in December 1982.

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RAISING THE

One of the most remarkable events in recent military history was the speed at which the British Armed Forces assembled a Task Force large enough to recapture the Falkland Islands in 1982. Within days of the invasion thousands of troops and dozens of ships were on the move to the South Atlantic. This is the story of how it happened.

They met in the Prime Minister's office in the House of Commons. Along with Margaret Thatcher was John Nott, Secretary of State for Defence, Richard Luce and Humphrey Atkins of the Foreign Office, and Admiral Leach, the First Sea Lord. Argentine warships had been observed moving southwards in considerable strength and it was assumed that their objective was the Falklands.

The PM asked Harry Leach if there was anything which could be done to prevent the Islands from being invaded. "No", said Sir Harry, the Falklands were 8,000 miles away. However, he continued, it might be possible to send a "retrieval force" to win the Islands back. Mrs Thatcher asked Leach how long it would take to assemble such a force, and he replied that it would take time. "How much time?" the PM demanded to know. "48 hours" was Sir Harry's reply.[1]

*

The man destined to lead the Task Force, Rear-Admiral J.F. Woodward, was engaged in the annual *Springtrain* fleet exercises in and around the western Mediterranean. His ships were actually off Casablanca test-firing the Sea Dart missile system against un-manned drones when, at 03.00 hours on 2 April 1982, Woodward received his instructions. For the past two days he had been preparing a SNORC – a Short Notice Operational Readiness Check. Now he knew for sure, he was told to prepare seven of his warships for a covert voyage to the South Atlantic. Operation *Corporate* had begun.

The vessels earmarked for the Falklands were

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TASK FORCE

two County-class destroyers, HMS *Antrim* and HMS *Glamorgan,* and three of the more modern Type 42 destroyers, HMS *Coventry,* HMS *Glasgow* and HMS *Sheffield.* These would be accompanied by one Type 22 frigate, HMS *Brilliant*, and the general-purpose frigate, HMS *Arrow.*

These ships mounted a variety of weapons with different capabilities. *Brilliant* was equipped with the Sea Wolf air-defence missiles for close protection of capital ships, whilst the Type 42s carried the longer-range Sea Dart "open ocean" anti-aircraft system. For their part, the County-class destroyers were armed with a missile that would soon become a household name across Britain – the French-built Exocet. The remaining five warships of Woodward's flotilla were to return to the UK.

At daybreak on 2 April 1982, the warships returning home were ordered to transfer as much of their stores and equipment as they could shift to those selected for the Falklands. They "threw everything they had" at those bound for the South Atlantic – everything from food to helicopters. Fortunately, the weather was good and the sea calm and the transfers were completed before nightfall.

Earlier, the *Rothesay*-class frigate HMS *Plymouth* had left the *Springtrain* exercise fully stored for a tour in the West Indies. She was promptly recalled to Gibraltar to pick up a collection of charts of the South Atlantic. *Plymouth* then re-joined Woodward's force that evening and at 02.30 hours on the 3rd, the eight warships, along with the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) oiler RFA *Tidespring,* sailed for the Southern Ocean.

Some naval units were already on their way towards the Falklands. The fleet replenishment ship RFA *Fort Austin* had also been engaged in the *Springtrain* exercise but, in anticipation of Operation *Corporate* being sanctioned, she had left Gibraltar at 10.00 hours on 29 March, three days before the Argentine landing.

Three other vessels sailed south on 1 April. The nuclear-powered submarine HMS *Spartan* was off Gibraltar and was ordered to depart immediately for the South Atlantic. That same day *Spartan*'s sister ship, HMS *Splendid,* left Faslane along with another nuclear-powered hunter-killer submarine, HMS *Conqueror*, which had a contingent of Special Boat Service personnel on board.

So, by 3 April 1982, six destroyers, three submarines, two frigates, a supply ship and a tanker were already rushing to the South Atlantic. However, if a retrieval mission was to be undertaken it could not be accomplished without ground troops and air support. It was the latter which presented the Admiralty with the gravest problems.

All that was available to Leach were the 23-year-old HMS *Hermes* and HMS *Invincible.* These two ships each carried a squadron of Westland Sea King anti-submarine helicopters but only five Sea Harriers. Ten aircraft alone could not protect the Task Force, so every available Sea Harrier was flown to Portsmouth where *Hermes* and *Invincible* were

MAIN PICTURE: Part of the Task Force pictured at sea in the Total Exclusion Zone in early June 1982. HMS *Andromeda* can be seen furthest from the camera behind HMS *Yarmouth.* HMS Cardiff's deck is in the foreground.

FAR LEFT: Part of the "Bristol Group" pictured, from HMS *Cardiff,* heading towards the South Atlantic. From left to right are the Leander-class frigate HMS *Minerva,* RFA *Olna* and the Type 21 frigate HMS *Active*.

MAIN PICTURE: **Elements of the Task Force anchored off Ascension Island whilst en route to the Falklands. The ships in this view include SS *Canberra*, a pair of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary's Landing Ship Logistics, and the MV *Elk*. The main port facilities at Ascension, one small jetty in Clarence Bay and a mobile crane, can be seen in the foreground.** (Courtesy of Bob Shackleton, via Gordon Smith, Naval-History.Net)

BELOW: **HMS *Invincible* and the local supply ship RMS *St Helena* pictured at anchor off Ascension Island. Note the helicopters undertaking vertical replenishment tasks from the former's flight deck.** (Courtesy of Bob Shackleton, via Gordon Smith, Naval-History.Net)

being made ready. When the two ships sailed from Portsmouth, past crowds cheering on the quaysides, *Hermes* and *Invincible* could count twenty Harriers on their decks and would later receive a further eleven of these versatile aircraft, including six of the RAF's GR3 ground-attack variant.

These valuable ships could not be allowed to travel the 8,000 miles to the Falklands without escort and, with far less ceremony, the frigates HMS *Alacrity* and HMS *Antelope* slipped out of Plymouth and joined the carriers off Land's End. That same day two more oilers, RFA *Olmeda* and RFA *Pearleaf*, set sail for the Falklands, as did the fleet replenishment ship, RFA *Resource*. Another two warships, the frigates HMS *Yarmouth* and HMS *Broadsword*, which were sailing through the Mediterranean on their way to the Arabian Gulf were ordered to turn around, eventually meeting up with the carrier group beyond Gibraltar.

This, then, was the original Task Force of two aircraft carriers, seven destroyers, five frigates, three submarines and four Fleet Auxiliaries – all despatched by 5 April, just three days after the Argentine invasion. Leach had been as good as his word.

*

This had been an incredible achievement by the Royal Navy. When in theatre this force would prove powerful enough to drive the Argentine Navy back into its ports and to establish an "exclusion zone" around the Falklands that would prevent the invaders from being reinforced by sea. What was needed now were the troops to land and recapture the Islands and the ships to take them there.

The first military unit to be put under notice for immediate deployment to the South Atlantic was 3 Commando Brigade. Led by Brigadier Julian Thompson, this force consisted of 40, 42 and 45 Commando, the 1st Raiding Squadron, for small-boat work in coastal waters, a contingent of Commando Engineers, a Commando logistics regiment, an Air Defence Troop, an electronic-countermeasures unit, a regiment of Commando artillery (with helicopter-portable 105mm guns), and even its own squadron of helicopters. The brigade was designed to be able to operate entirely independently of other supporting units. Thompson was woken at 03.00 hours on 2 April and told to prepare his brigade for departure on the 5th.

Landing ships would be needed for the assault upon the Falklands and the amphibious assault ship HMS *Fearless*, which would be the assault HQ ship, and four RFA Landing Ships (Logistics), or LSLs, were made available. The LSLs were *Sir Geraint* and *Sir Galahad* at Devonport and *Sir Lancelot* and *Sir Percivale* stationed at Marchwood, Southampton. These four joined the carrier group as it departed Home waters on the 5th.

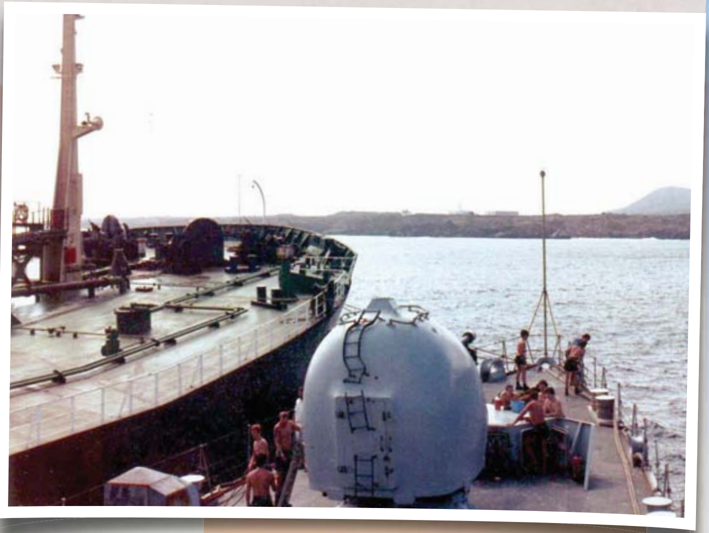
Another two LSLs, RFA *Sir Tristram*, which was in Belize, and RFA *Sir Bedivere*, located at Vancouver, would join the Task Force in the South Atlantic. The amphibious assault ship HMS *Intrepid* had actually paid off its crew ready for disposal. It was hurriedly re-commissioned and sailed from the UK three weeks later.

*

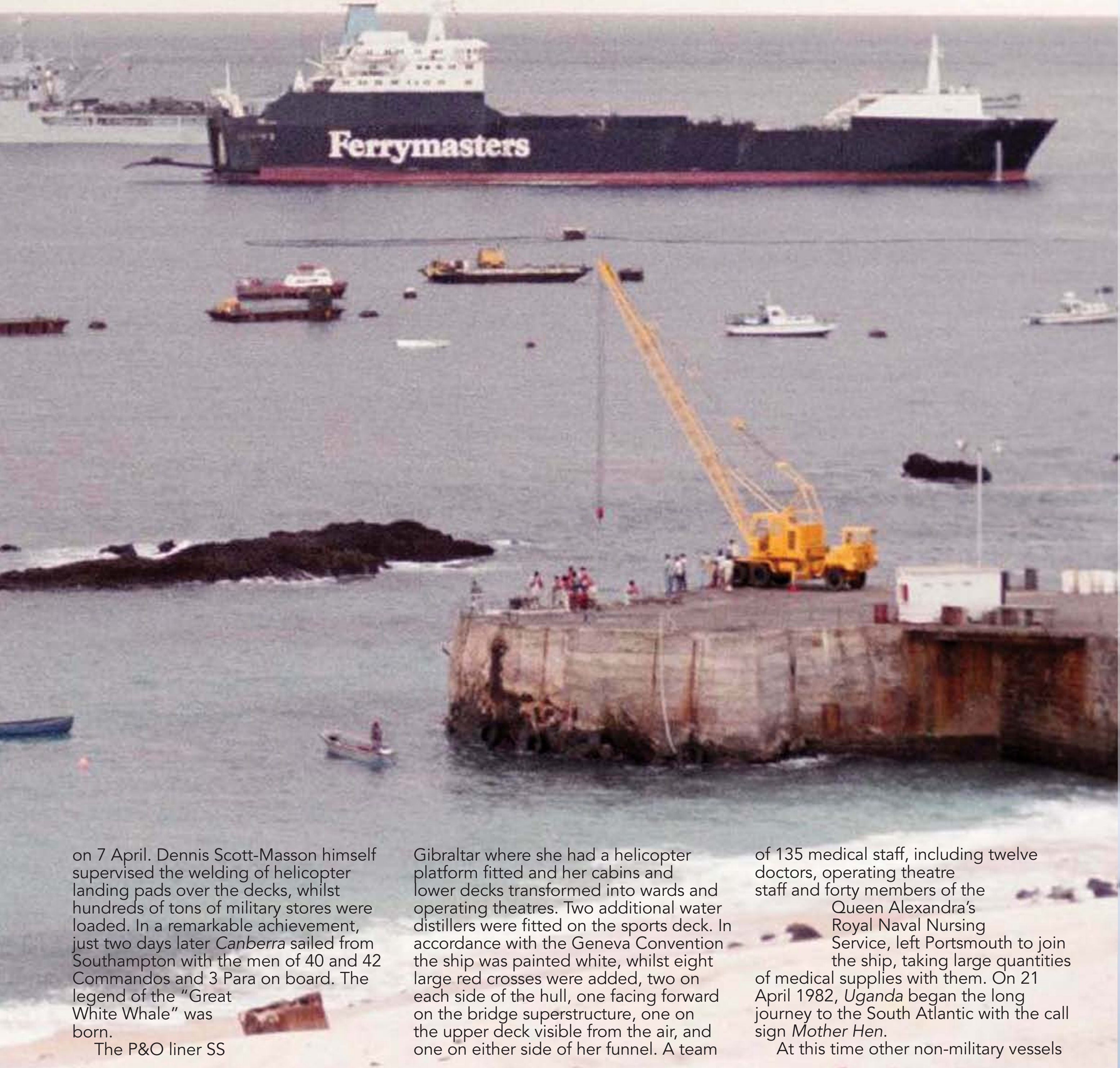
On 3 April 1982, when the size of the 10,000-strong Argentine occupying force became known, it was decided that a single infantry brigade would not be sufficient to oust the invaders. As a result, another battalion of infantry, an anti-aircraft battery and a contingent of light tanks were added to the Commando Brigade. Available for immediate deployment was the 3rd Battalion The Parachute Regiment (3 Para) which was stationed within easy reach of Portsmouth at Aldershot. The other units added to Julian Thompson's force were 'T' Battery 12th Air Defence Regiment, Royal Artillery, armed with Rapier anti-aircraft missiles, and a small detachment of four Scorpion light tanks and four Scimitar armoured reconnaissance vehicles along with a Samson recovery vehicle from 'B' Squadron, Blues and Royals. Thompson's force now numbered 5,500 men.

All these troops were immediately prepared for embarkation, but there were no ships to transport them. In the era of air travel, Britain had not attempted to move large bodies of troops by sea for decades, so the Royal Navy was granted permission to take ships up from the civilian maritime trade. These vessels became known as STUFT – Ships Taken Up from the Trade.

Some of these ships, such as the tankers, would be performing a similar function to their normal employment but for others major conversions were required. This was particularly the case



ABOVE: HMS *Cardiff* alongside a tanker at Ascension Island on her return journey to the United Kingdom. Note the damage to the gun ladder caused by a freak wave.



with the troop transports. Amongst these was the luxury passenger liner SS *Canberra*, which was on a cruise in the Mediterranean.

Whilst at sea, *Canberra*'s captain, Dennis Scott-Masson, received a cryptic message asking for his time of arrival at Gibraltar, a port not on the itinerary. Soon afterwards he rendezvoused with a small launch to embark a group of men who briefed him about an "interesting assignment". It was then that Scott-Masson learnt that the MoD had requisitioned *Canberra* for use as a troopship. She immediately sailed to Southampton where she was quickly refitted, the conversion work commencing at Vosper Ship Repairers on 7 April. Dennis Scott-Masson himself supervised the welding of helicopter landing pads over the decks, whilst hundreds of tons of military stores were loaded. In a remarkable achievement, just two days later *Canberra* sailed from Southampton with the men of 40 and 42 Commandos and 3 Para on board. The legend of the "Great White Whale" was born.

The P&O liner SS *Uganda* was on an educational cruise in the Mediterranean when she was requisitioned on 10 April. She was directed to Naples where her 315 cabin passengers and 940 school children were to be prematurely disembarked. As *Uganda* docked in Naples, people on the quayside could hear the school children singing *Rule Britannia*.

Uganda had a three-day refit in Gibraltar where she had a helicopter platform fitted and her cabins and lower decks transformed into wards and operating theatres. Two additional water distillers were fitted on the sports deck. In accordance with the Geneva Convention the ship was painted white, whilst eight large red crosses were added, two on each side of the hull, one facing forward on the bridge superstructure, one on the upper deck visible from the air, and one on either side of her funnel. A team of 135 medical staff, including twelve doctors, operating theatre staff and forty members of the Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service, left Portsmouth to join the ship, taking large quantities of medical supplies with them. On 21 April 1982, *Uganda* began the long journey to the South Atlantic with the call sign *Mother Hen*.

At this time other non-military vessels

were undergoing similar work. The roll-on roll-off ferry MV *Elk* had been fitted with a helicopter pad and two Bofors 40 mm guns. When she left for the Falklands, amongst her war cargo she was carrying three Sea King helicopters, ammunition, four FV101 Scorpion and four FV107 Scimitar armoured reconnaissance vehicles. Seven other ferries were also taken up, all of which had helicopter pads fitted to enable them to transfer the equipment they carried south.

Other STUFT, their civilian crews all volunteers, were to follow over the subsequent days. The magnificent RMS *Queen Elizabeth 2*, often referred to simply as *QE2*, was commissioned to carry further infantry reinforcements, in the shape of 1st Battalion Welsh Guards, 2nd Battalion Scots Guards, 1st Battalion 7th Gurkha Rifles and 2 Para, all of which made up 5 Brigade, to the South Atlantic – at a cost of approximately £1,000,000 per week. *QE2*'s refit at Southampton included the installation of three helicopter pads, the transformation of public lounges into dormitories, the installation of fuel pipes that ran through the ship down to the engine room to allow for refuelling at sea, and the covering of carpets with 2,000 sheets of hardboard. Over 650 Cunard crewmembers volunteered to remain on board for the voyage to war.

Container ships, such as *Atlantic Causeway* and *Atlantic Conveyor*, were given flight-decks for the helicopters and Harriers that they carried to the South Atlantic. Tugs, cargo-ships, ferries, coasters and tankers all had a part to play. Most of these had to be re-fitted in some form, mostly in terms of having helicopter pads added. All of these were requisitioned, re-directed to the appropriate ports, re-fitted and loaded with their war material within the course of just a few weeks.

*

The great armada of ships deployed in the South Atlantic included two aircraft carriers, eight destroyers, fifteen frigates, one diesel-electric and five nuclear-powered submarines, two amphibious assault ships, three patrol vessels, three survey vessels, five mine-sweeping trawlers, ten oilers, five fleet replenishment ships, a helicopter support ship, six landing ships, a Royal Navy tug and a RN mooring vessel. In addition to these sixty-two naval vessels, there were no less than forty-four ships taken up from the trade.[2]

This made a staggering total of 106 vessels, and 10,000 of the toughest troops in the world, assembled 8,000 miles away in the South Atlantic in a matter of weeks. It was an astonishing achievement and it sent a signal to the rest of the world that the Falkland Islands would be retaken. ■

ABOVE LEFT: **HMS *Exeter* alongside the MV *British Tay*, one of the STUFT vessels, in the South Atlantic.**

ABOVE RIGHT: **The waters around the Falkland Islands were dangerous ones, not just for the vessels of the Royal Navy, but also for the Ships Taken Up From Trade or STUFT. Here, part of the Task Force is pictured under attack in San Carlos Water after landing troops to retake the Falklands. The MV *Norland* is straddled by bombs as she prepares to head for open water after disembarking men of 2 Parachute Regiment. On the left is RFA *Stromness*, whilst on the right is HMS *Intrepid*.** (Glenn Sands Collection)

BELOW: **HMS *Cardiff* at anchor near Stanley after the Argentine surrender, with *Canberra* visible to the left.**

NOTES:

1. M. Middlebrook, *Task Force: The Falklands War*, 1982 (London 1987), pp.65-8.
2. D. Brown, *The Royal Navy and the Falklands War* (London 1987), pp.358-70.

RAF HARRIERS OVER THE FALKLANDS

In examining the role of the RAF's Harriers in the Falklands War, namely the aircraft and pilots of 1 Squadron, Dr Alfred Price details the remarkable story of the only RAF prisoner of war of the conflict.

The Falklands Conflict was nearly six weeks old when *Atlantic Conveyor* arrived in the Total Exclusion Zone surrounding the Islands. As deck cargo the vessel carried a powerful reinforcement for the Task Force in the form of six Harrier GR3s of 1 Squadron RAF, eight Sea Harriers of the Fleet Air Arm's 809 Naval Air Squadron, and an assortment of helicopters. The next day and a half was taken up with the transfer of men and equipment to the ships of the Task Force. As part of that process, 1 Squadron established itself aboard HMS *Hermes* and prepared for action.

The GR3s launched their first attack on the afternoon of 20 May 1982. Wing Commander Peter Squire led his two flight commanders, Squadron Leader Bob Iveson and Squadron Leader Jerry Pook, in a low level attack on a large fuel dump established by Argentine troops on West Falkland.

"We swept in low over the hills, and then suddenly in front of us was our target," recalled Bob Iveson, "rows of jerry cans and forty-gallon drums laid out on the ground, so that supposedly a single bomb would not set off the lot. But in fact they had laid them out in almost a perfect shape for a cluster bomb pattern!

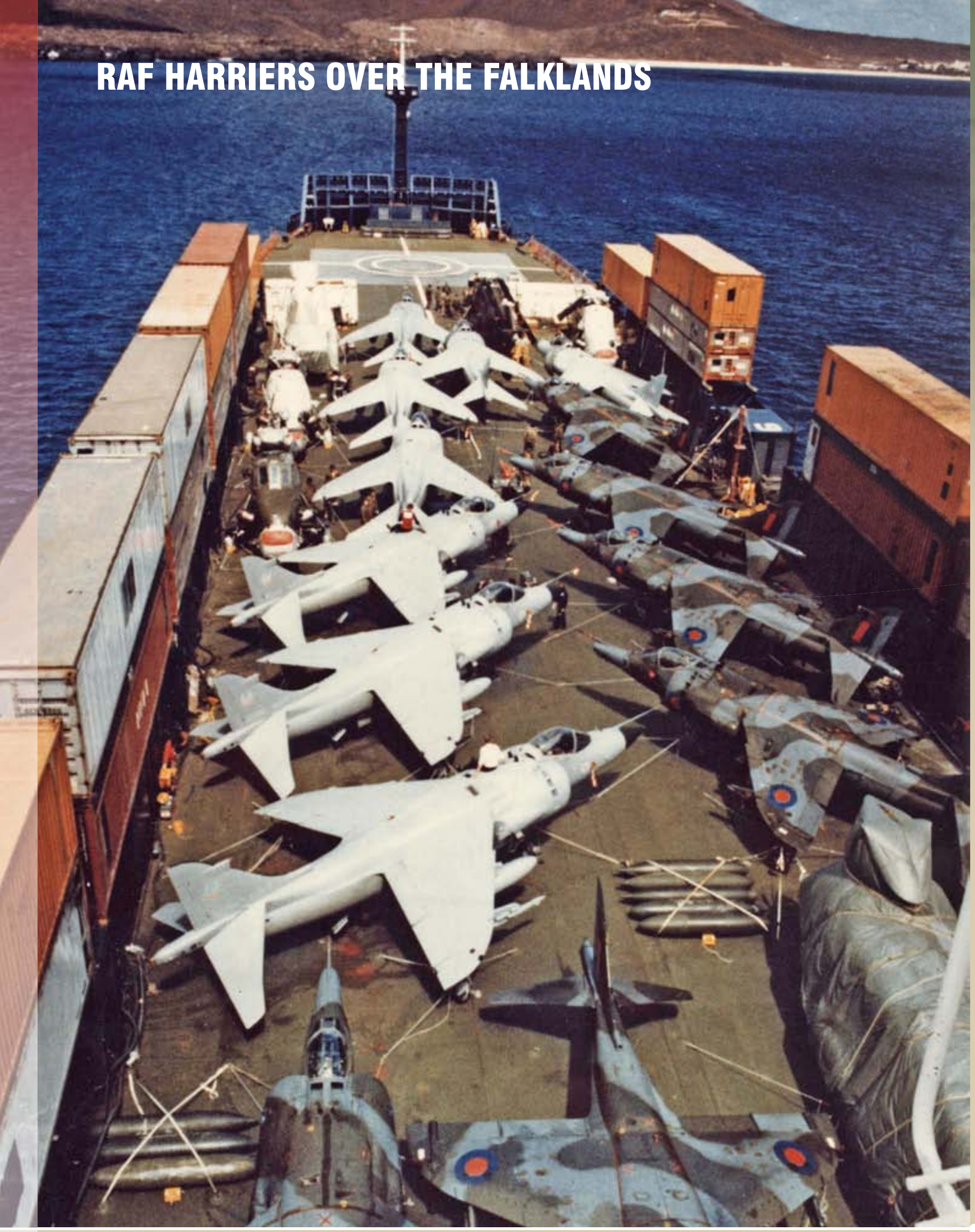
"I saw the Boss go in first, his cluster bombs hit and the fuel dump started to go up with a lot of secondary explosions. Then I went in, attacking from thirty degrees to the right of the Boss's line. Finally Jerry Pook came in on a similar line to the Boss and put down his bombs. So far as I could see not a shot was fired at us. We ran out past East Head, turned north-east up Falkland Sound and then started our climb back to high altitude to return to the carrier."

On the following day, 21 May, British troops landed at Port San Carlos and quickly established themselves ashore. In support of these operations, the GR3s flew armed reconnaissance missions along possible Argentine approach routes leading to the landing area, searching for signs of use. They found none.

Whilst this was happening, Jerry Pook and Flight Lieutenant Mark Hare were tasked to attack a forward operating base that had been established for Argentine helicopters and which was reported by an SAS patrol near Mount Kent on East Falkland. The two pilots arrived in the area at first light to find a Chinook, two Pumas and a Bell UH-1 sitting on the ground spaced well apart. The GR3s made repeated strafing attacks on the aircraft with their 30mm Aden cannon, departing with the Chinook and two Pumas burning fiercely.

Questioned after the conflict on why he had made no attempt to launch a counter-attack on the British troops once he knew they were ashore at Port San Carlos, the commander of the Argentine garrison in Stanley, General Mario Menéndez, stated that he lacked the necessary helicopter lift to fly in sufficient troops and weapons to mount

ABOVE: Flight Lieutenant Mark Hare pictured conducting his pre-flight checks at Wideawake Airfield on Ascension Island, before taking off to fly out to the container ship *Atlantic Conveyor*, during the journey to the Falklands. (All images courtesy of the author unless stated otherwise)



LEFT: The scene on the deck of *Atlantic Conveyor* as the ship prepares to set sail from Ascension on the last leg of her journey towards the Total Exclusion Zone.

BELOW: Wing Commander Peter Squire commanded 1 Squadron during the Falklands War.

an effective counter-attack. Even before news of the landings reached the Argentine General, Jerry Pook and Mark Hare had wrecked about a third of his helicopter lifting capacity.

ROYAL AIR FORCE UNITS

Squadrons or Detachments of:

1	Squadron	Harrier GR3
10	Squadron	VC 10 Mk.I
18	Squadron	Chinook HC Mk.I
24	Squadron	Hercules C Mk.I
30	Squadron	Hercules C Mk.I
47	Squadron	Hercules C Mk.I
70	Squadron	Hercules C Mk.I
29	Squadron	Phantom FGR2
42	Squadron	Nimrod Mk.I
44	Squadron	Vulcan B2
50	Squadron	Vulcan B2
101	Squadron	Vulcan B2
55	Squadron	Victor K2
57	Squadron	Victor K2
120	Squadron	Nimrod Mk.2
201	Squadron	Nimrod Mk.2
206	Squadron	Nimrod Mk.2
202	Squadron	Search & Rescue Sea King

RAF Regiment:

3	Regiment	Wing Headquarters Unit
15	Regiment	Squadron Detachment Field Squadron
63	Regiment	Squadron (Rapier)

Other Units:

Tactical Communications Wing
Tactical Supply Wing
Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team

On the morning of 21 May 1 Squadron also suffered its first loss. On his first sortie over the Falklands, and flying from HMS *Hermes*, Flight Lieutenant Jeff Glover had been tasked to accompany Wing Commander Peter Squire on a mission to support the landings near San Carlos Settlement. Flight Lieutenant Jeff Glover was a relatively inexperienced Harrier pilot before he set off for the South Atlantic, though he had flown the type for more than a year. He had also accumulated more than 1,000 hours as an instructor on Hawks.

Having taken-off, Squire's undercarriage failed to retract and he aborted. Jeff Glover continued but, with no Argentine troops apparent in the San Carlos area, the forward air controller diverted him to Port Howard to the south-west. In his first pass Glover spotted nothing to attack. He was asked to fly over again and photograph the settlement.

Glover waited for a time to allow any forces in the area to relax, but found his options for a run from a different direction were limited. Again he sighted no enemy, but his aircraft began to take hits and became uncontrollable, forcing him to eject.

"After I pulled the handle there was a crash above my head as the explosive charge shattered the canopy," Glover recalled. "As I was blasted out into a 600 mph wind my left arm was wrenched back. I passed out." Glover would later find that he had sustained broken bones on his left side.

"When I came to I was under water. I worked out which way was up and swam to the surface. I came up and saw my parachute floating in the water in front of me." In his injured state Glover omitted to inflate his life jacket, but he was kept afloat by air trapped in his rubberised immersion suit.

"I had a good look around and saw the shore about 200 yards away. I started trying to swim towards it on my back but I got nowhere fast – I had not released my parachute harness. So I gave that up and started to think things out. I was in the process of releasing the pack connectors, before inflating my dinghy, when I heard voices and shouts. I looked around and saw about ten Argentine soldiers standing on the shore. Then a rowing boat put out with half a dozen soldiers on board.

"In the front of the boat was an officer (Marine Captain Santiago Llanos) and under his direction the soldiers came alongside me and hauled me on board; as they lifted me my arm hurt like hell. The officer spoke to me in good English. He said he was a doctor, asked where it hurt and said I would be all right, he would look after me.

"One of the things I asked him was, 'What shot me down?' He said, 'Everything, we were all firing at you.'

"We were rowed to the shore, and then we got out of the boat. The officer had a motorbike; I was put on the pillion. The officer drove and we rode off down a rough track, with a soldier on each side jogging along and supporting me. I was holding my left arm with my right, in the most comfortable position I could find. I was bleeding rather a lot from my face. I could see the blood dropping on to the back of the officer's tunic. We continued on the motorbike for about 500 yards, and then we arrived at the Port Howard social club which the Argentine troops had requisitioned as a medical centre.

"The Captain and the medical

orderlies treated me very kindly. I had not been able to look at myself in the mirror, but with the injuries to my face I knew I must have looked a mess. The cuts were probably caused when the explosive cord detonated to shatter the canopy immediately before I ejected or when my helmet was torn off during the ejection or when I hit the water. My right eye was badly bruised and swollen. I couldn't see out of it."

Flight Lieutenant Glover recalled that he was treated with curiosity while at Port Howard, but no hostility. The next day a Bell UH-1H helicopter came to fly him to Goose Green. As he made for the helicopter he was introduced to a young Argentine soldier who was credited with shooting the Harrier down with a Blowpipe missile. Glover shook his hand and said, "Good effort", though he himself believed that he was downed by cannon fire.

Later Glover was flown to Stanley, and then, by Hercules, to Argentina. On that flight his companions included Argentine pilots who had been shot down. Everyone remained very friendly. At the Comodoro Rivadavia military air base he was accommodated first in hospital and then in the officers' mess, under armed guard. A number of officers came to see him and some casual attempts at interrogation were made.

Eventually Glover was transferred to the Chamical air base, where there was more hostility to him, though no ill treatment, and he received two visits from the Red Cross. When that phase ended he was flown first to Buenos Aries, where he received more medical treatment, and then to Montevideo where he was handed over to the Uruguayan authorities. From here, a British Caledonian DC-10 flew him to Gatwick for an emotional reunion with his wife Dee.

*

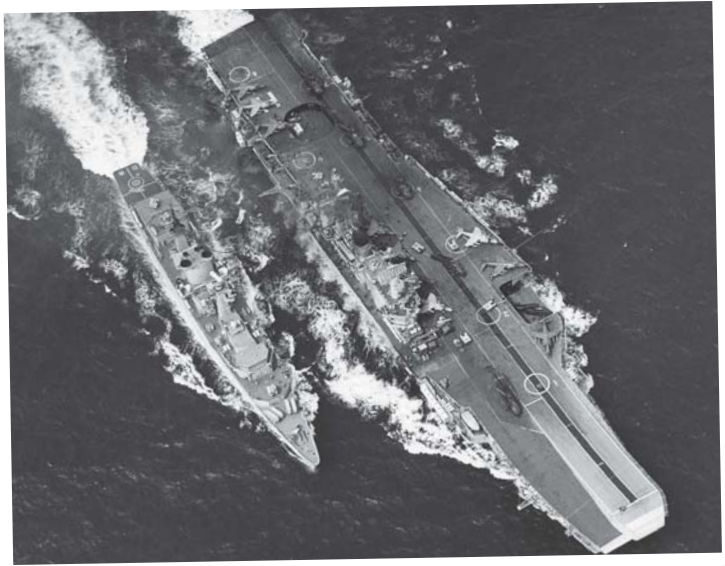
During the days that followed the landings at San Carlos, 1 Squadron was in action whenever the weather permitted, striking at targets on East and West Falkland.

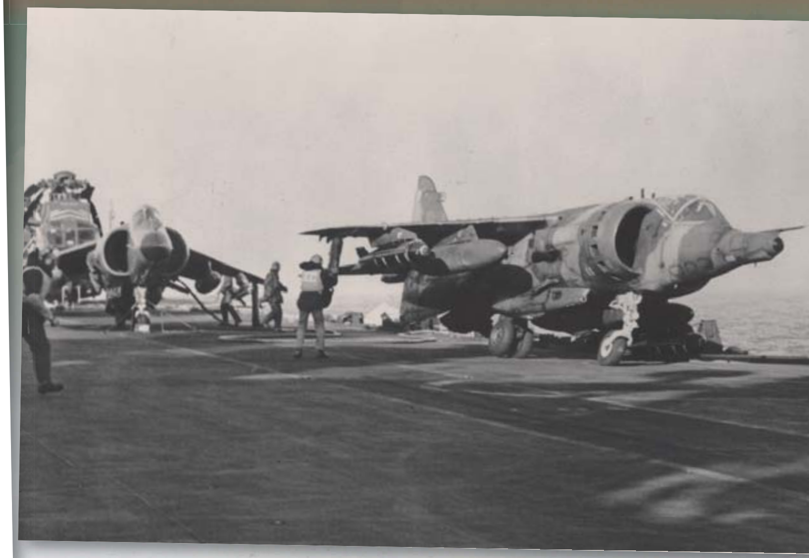
Another loss came on 27 May when Squadron Leader Bob Iveson was shot down whilst attacking enemy positions at Goose Green. Whilst Iveson ejected safely, his Harrier, XZ988, crashed nearby on the Lafonia peninsula of East Falkland. Iveson spent three days in hiding in the open before he was picked up by friendly forces.

The most noteworthy attack took place on the late afternoon of 28 May, when Squadron Leader Peter Harris led a three-aircraft close support mission against Argentine troops in contact with the 2nd Battalion Parachute Regiment near Goose Green. Also taking part in that

ABOVE: One of 1 Squadron's GR3 Harriers making a vertical landing on HMS *Hermes.*

BELOW: Pilots of 1 Squadron's first team pictured on *Atlantic Conveyor* whilst the ship was en route to the Falklands. From left to right, standing, are: Squadron Leader Peter Harris, Flight Lieutenant Jeff Glover, Flight Lieutenant Mark Hare, Flight Lieutenant John Rochfort, Squadron Leader Jerry Pook, Wing Commander Peter Squire, and Squadron Leader Bob Iveson. Flight Lieutenant Tony Harper is sitting in the foreground.





ABOVE LEFT: HMS *Hermes* at sea in the South Atlantic with HMS *Broadsword* alongside.

ABOVE RIGHT: This GR3 made a heavy landing on HMS *Hermes*, bounced into the air and came to rest with the port outrigger wheel over the starboard side of the ship. Fortunately, the combined weight on the starboard wing of the Harrier was enough to hold it in place until the deck crane was rushed in to stabilize the situation.

engagement were Flight Lieutenant Tony Harper and Squadron Leader Jerry Pook.

Throughout that morning and early afternoon the Paras, some of whom were pinned down and running short of ammunition, had been calling for a close air support mission to relieve the pressure on them. However, the presence of low cloud in the battle area carried too great a risk of incurring a "friendly fire" incident. Only in the late afternoon did the cloud start to clear, and the GR3s were ordered to take off.

It was hoped that by the time the jump jets reached the combat area, the cloud base would have lifted sufficiently to permit an attack. As the RAF pilots approached the target at medium altitude, they were briefed on their target by the forward air controller, Captain Kevin Arnold. They were tasked to attack a number of Argentine guns on a promontory at Goose Green immediately to the east of the settlement. These weapons, a mixture of 105mm howitzers and 35mm anti-aircraft guns, were operating in the direct-fire role and had halted the Paras' advance.

"As we ran in at 50 to 100 feet the whole area was as one would expect a battlefield to look," Squadron Leader Harris later commented. "We could not see any people, but there was a lot of smoke and several fires burning. Target acquisition was easy because the promontory at Goose Green is such a prominent navigational feature. I could see some activity, though it was impossible to identify it exactly, and I dropped my cluster bombs on the easternmost point.

"As I let go my bombs I saw activity to my right so I told Tony Harper to put his cluster bombs there; he just had time to re-align his attack and put his weapons to the right of mine and about 300 yards behind."

As Harper sped clear of the target, Jerry Pook ran in from the north and fired two pods of 2-inch rockets – a total of seventy-two missiles – on the part of the promontory not covered by bursts from the exploding cluster bomblets. The attack came as a complete surprise to the Argentine troops and the attacking pilots saw no return fire.

One of those on the ground who watched the attack was Major Chris Keeble. He had inherited command of 2 Para earlier the same day when Lieutenant-Colonel H. Jones had been killed in action. "They came streaking in, one behind the other," remembers Keeble. "Each dropped bombs, some on the tip of the peninsula and others at the entrance of the isthmus. Then I heard the cluster bomblets going off.

"Their explosions merging together; it looked as if some hit the sea – there was a sound like throwing gravel into water. Then came the rockets, which were most effective, they hit the tip of the peninsula where the 35mm guns were. The attack gave a great boost to the morale of our troops. I think some of them thought the Harriers had come in a bit too close for comfort, but that is war."

Squadron Leader Harris' attack was a textbook example of a successful close air support mission: a hard-hitting surprise attack against a target of importance, launched at a crucial time in the land battle and whose results were clearly seen by the ground troops, strengthening the resolve of those on one side and demoralising those on the other.

Major Keeble had no doubt that

ABOVE LEFT: A pilot's eye view of the Harrier operating strip at San Carlos – nicknamed "Sid's Strip".

ABOVE RIGHT: A GR3 at readiness at "Sid's Strip".

BELOW: A Harrier GR3 pictured about to take off from HMS *Hermes* on a war flight. The aircraft is fitted with a 1,000lb Paveway laser-guided bomb under the port wing, and a 1,000lb free-fall bomb under the starboard wing. The GR3 on the left of the picture is about to move into position behind the lead aircraft and follow it into the air.

the Harrier attack had a decisive effect on the battle: "After that there was a marked slackening in the fighting, which had gone on fiercely the whole day. Afterwards I sat down and thought 'Where have we got to now? What is the enemy thinking?' I tried to assess the situation from his point of view. He was encircled and we had demonstrated that we could bring in the Harriers to attack his positions surgically. It was then I began to consider that their will might have been had broken, and maybe we could go for a surrender."

Keeble's analysis was correct. The following morning the Argentine garrison – which outnumbered the Paras – surrendered.

The squadron lost further Harriers to ground fire on 27 and 30 May, though on each occasion the pilots, Bob Iveson and Jerry Pook, ejected safely and avoided capture. That reduced the number of GR3s in the South Atlantic combat zone to just three, necessitating delivery of two of those held in reserve on Ascension.

On 1 June 1982, Flight Lieutenant Murdo Macleod and Flight Lieutenant Mike Beech duly delivered the pair of GR3s to the war zone in a 3,300 nautical mile flight from Ascension direct to HMS *Hermes*. Supported by Victor tankers, the operation, conducted beyond reach of land airfields along much of its length, took 8 hours 25 minutes.

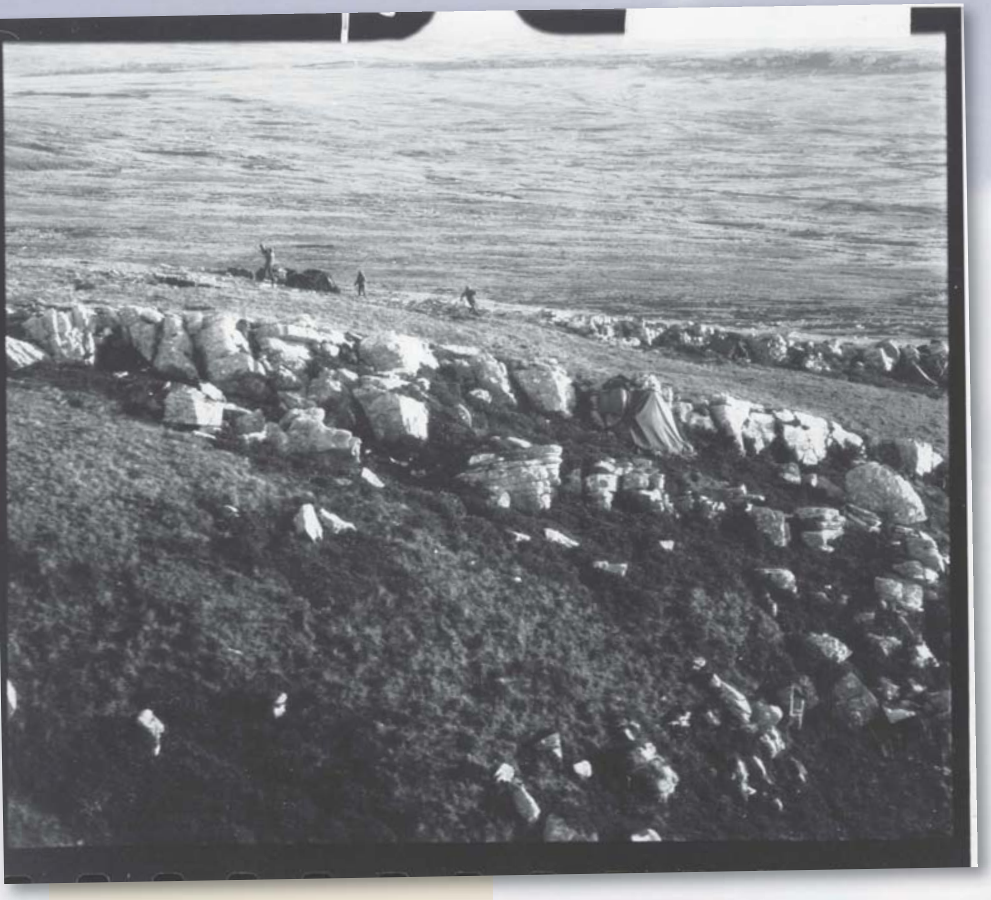
About half way down the flight path, the helicopter support ship RFA *Engadine* was in position, in case one of the jump jets got into difficulties. The flight went according to plan, however, and *Engadine* was not needed. Macleod later commented that during the flight the greatest problem was boredom. This he relieved to some extent by playing music on the Harrier's built-in tape deck normally used to record training missions.

"My main sustenance during the trip was the Brandenburg Concertos," he noted. "They came over in my earphones in glorious Lo-Fi, but it was a fairly pleasant way to pass the time."

A further pair of GR3s would make the flight from Ascension to HMS *Hermes* on 8 June, though on that occasion without any support in place along the route.

Once the beachhead at Port San Carlos was fully secure, Royal Engineers began laying out aluminium matting that would form a Harrier operating strip immediately west of the settlement. That was no easy task as Wing Commander Fred Trowern, the senior RAF officer ashore, recalled: "It was made by hand, from plates each about 10 feet long and 2 feet wide, slotted together. The helicopters flew them in, in bundles, then they had to be laid out by hand. The individual strips were damned heavy – it was as much as two men could do to lift one – and if you were not careful you could cut yourself on the edges."

It was hard physical labour, carried out in an area that was liable to suffer air attack. The weather was cold, wet and very miserable. Within a week, however,



ABOVE: A remarkable shot taken from Flight Lieutenant Hare's Harrier during a reconnaissance mission over Mount Longdon, 10 June 1982. The GR3 was flying at high speed towards the right of the photograph. Note the Argentine soldier equipped with a Blowpipe shoulder-launched missile unit struggling, unsuccessfully, to launch the weapon. Hare knew nothing of the drama until he landed back on HMS *Hermes* and his camera film was developed.

working on unprepared ground without any heavy equipment, the engineers had completed a 285-yard runway for take-offs, a 23-yard square pad for vertical landings and parking loops for four aircraft. The forward operating base, immediately nicknamed "Sid's Strip" after Squadron Leader Sid Morris who commanded it, was ready for operations on 2 June. At this point the weather intervened and it was not until 5 June that the first pair of GR3s landed there.

During the final ten days of the conflict, before the Argentine surrender on 14 June, 1 Squadron was in action on an almost daily basis flying missions in support of the British troops advancing on Stanley. Throughout the fighting the Harrier GR3s frequently took hits from small arms fire.

On 12 June, Murdo Macleod's aircraft was hit in the rear fuselage and the bullet passed through the duct carrying air to the rear reaction control jets. At first Macleod had no indication that anything was amiss – at least until he entered the hover before landing. Then the rear equipment bay was blasted with super-heated air and the electrical wiring and components there began to "cook".

Squadron Leader Harris, who had landed in front of Macleod, watched the drama unfold on the deck of *Hermes*: "Flyco called 'No.2, are you dumping fuel?' I looked over my shoulder to see what was happening, and patently it was not fuel. I called on the radio 'It's not fuel, it's smoke!'

"Murdo continued to decelerate. Then the Flyco called 'You'd better land quickly, there are bits falling off your aircraft!' In fact the 'bits' were large flakes of paint blistering off the heated rear fuselage and blowing away. But I didn't know that, and Murdo certainly didn't. He brought the Harrier into an immediate hover alongside the ship, eased it to the right and landed. It wasn't a 'controlled crash' on the deck, it was an immaculate vertical landing."

Once on the deck Macleod shut down the engine, the fire crew converged on the aircraft and blanketed the rear fuselage with foam.

So ended just one of the 2,000 or so Fleet Air Arm and RAF Harrier missions flown during the conflict, 126 of which were undertaken by 1 Squadron; a number equivalent to six sorties per day per aircraft. ■

RIGHT: One on One: the pilots of 1 Squadron fly their distinctive formation over the Stanley area at the end of the Falklands War.

BELOW: RAF Harriers in the Falklands after the end of the conflict. Part of No.1453 Flight, these aircraft, GR3 variants, are pictured at Port Stanley airport in 1984. After the success of RAF Harrier operations in the Falklands War, a detachment of six Harrier GR3As was established at Stanley airport, which became RAF Stanley, as part of British Forces Falkland Islands. As the rudimentary facilities at RAF Stanley improved HarDet (Harrier Detachment) Stanley was made autonomous with the formation of 1453 (Tactical Ground Attack) Flight, which initially operated from an apron by the side of the runway at the airfield's extreme western end.

Is this a Bad Day, Daddy?

On the night of 11/12 June 1982, the British naval and artillery bombardment continued to be delivered against Argentine positions around Stanley. During the firing that night one shell exploded over a house in the capital with tragic consequences. John Fowler, then the Falkland Islands' Superintendent of Education, describes what happened.

Being myself a journalist of sorts, I am resigned to the fact that for the majority of visiting journalists who have done any research about what happened in the Falklands in 1982, I figure in their notebooks, if mentioned at all, as "the man in whose house the women died". While this is indeed true, and I have in the past told the story so many times that it began to seem to me like a recital, it is not the whole story of what happened in 7 Ross Road West between the Argentine invasion on 2 April and the early hours of 12 June, when a stray British shell abruptly ended the lives of three people and, almost certainly, changed the lives of many more forever.

Before this tragic event, caused it would appear, not by carelessness or intent, but by a computer glitch in the guidance system of a naval gun, my family's life had already experienced a significant change with the birth on 13 April, of a baby son, Daniel Martin Fowler. Daniel was the first of four children to be born in Stanley during the Argentine occupation and therefore, I suppose, is entitled to Argentine citizenship even more than the rest of all those born in these disputed islands, should they ever wish to claim it.

Nothing normally changes a family's life like the birth of a new child. This was not really the case with Daniel. Such were the preoccupations of almost everyone around him, that the circumstances of his arrival had a kind of "make-shift" quality about them.

From 2 April, and the treatment of the first casualties during the Argentine assault on Government House, the then Senior Medical Officer had been obsessed with the need to prepare Stanley's small cottage hospital for war. Despite the fact that the British Task Force had still to be assembled and would not make its presence felt for a further month, the hospital wards were immediately purged of all but the very sickest patients and routine clinics for civilians were all but abandoned. Pre-natal classes for the handful of pregnant women, including my wife, continued, but only at the insistence of a doughty Welsh sister and then, I think, in her house, rather than in the hospital.

The reason for my doubt over the whereabouts of the ante-natal classes is simply that I was not there. In the interests of maintaining services to the

ABOVE: Number 7 Ross Road West, John Fowler's house in Stanley during the fighting in 1982, photographed in recent years. Located a few dozen yards from the 1914 Battle Memorial, there is nothing in this scene to indicate the tragedy that took place here in the early hours of 12 June 1982. (Courtesy of After the Battle)

ABOVE LEFT: **John Fowler's daughter Rachael pictured with an Argentine military policeman. The latter was one of a small group guarding the hospital and who, at the time the photograph was taken, were waiting for the helicopter bringing Major General Jeremy Moore to negotiate the surrender. By chance, the author recently met the soldier again when he was visiting the Falklands. His name is José Mayi. At the time of this image, recalls John Fowler, he was aged 19 and very glad to be going home.** (Courtesy of John Fowler)

ABOVE RIGHT: **The shell had that exploded above Number 7 Ross Road West had been fired by the Type 21 frigate HMS *Avenger*, pictured here whilst en route to the South Atlantic in 1982 as part of the Bristol Group.**

BELOW: **The house after the shell exploded. It looks pretty much untouched apart from the wreckage in the garden and the lumps out of the chimney; it is almost impossible to see the countless shrapnel or splinter holes in the roof.** (Courtesy of John Fowler)

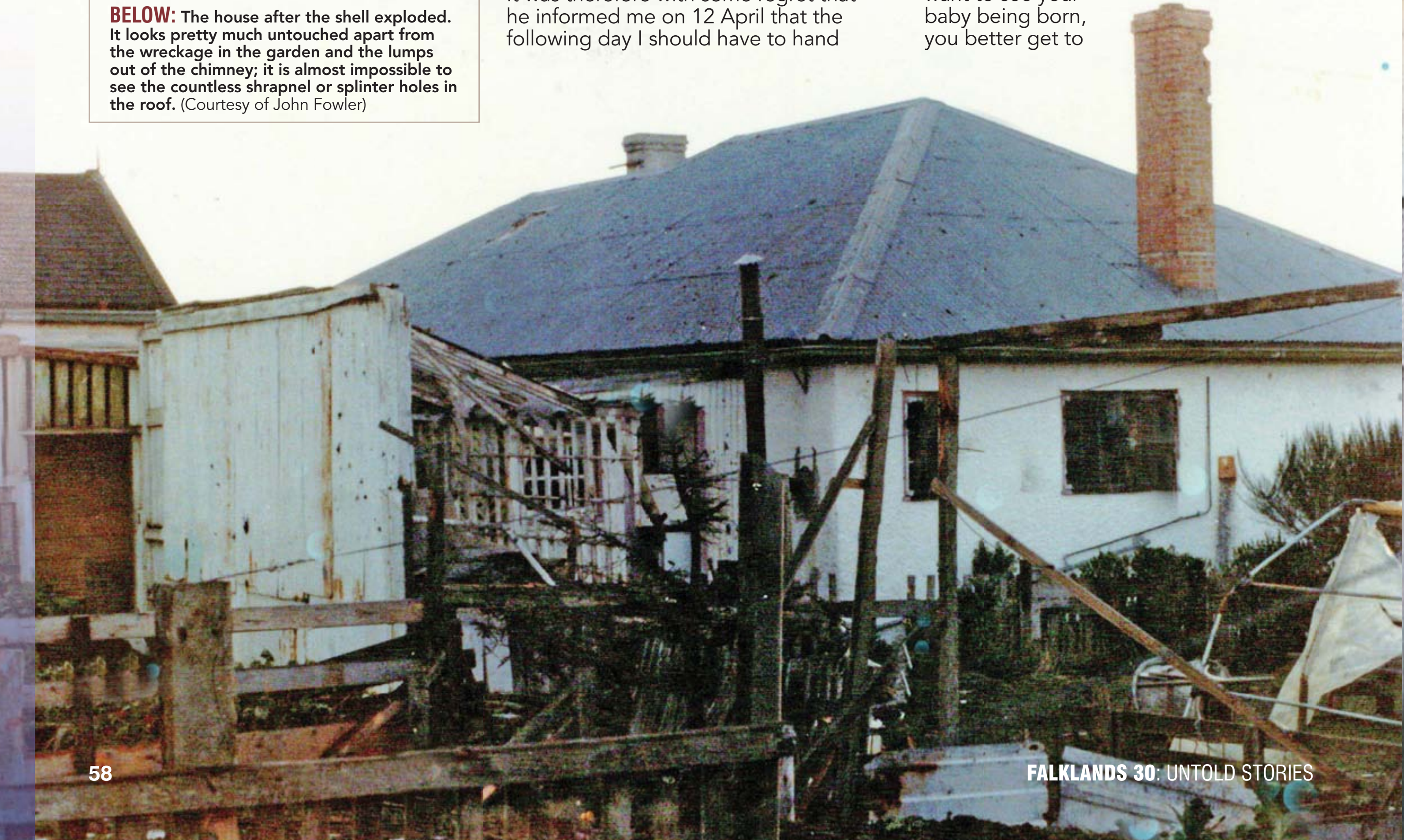
civilian population, it had been decided at a clandestine meeting of senior civil servants that our departments would continue to function, even if that meant temporarily accepting the authority of our illegitimate new leaders.

Such were the early demands upon my time made by my new boss, Argentine naval captain, Captain Barry Melbourne Hussey, "El Ingles" to his colleagues, that in the face of my wife's refusal to attend without a partner, I had to prevail upon one of my teaching staff, currently lodged in our house, to accompany her. Having just himself become the father of twins, he was up to speed on such matters and keen to take notes and assist with exercises, only faltering at the suggestion that he should suck my wife's nipples to encourage some process or other.

Captain Hussey was one of the three-man "Junta" set up to administer civilian affairs, a decent man, increasingly frustrated as time wore on as military imperatives impeded his desire to bring some kind of normality to the lives of Stanley's ever decreasing population. It was therefore with some regret that he informed me on 12 April that the following day I should have to hand over the town's secondary school to be occupied by a commando unit.

Accordingly, at 09.00 hours on 13 April, I was standing rather nervously outside the school, which was then on John Street, keys in hand, as a very professional group of Argentine marines advanced towards me. With weapons at the ready, they were sprinting for cover in doorways and behind fences, in very much the same manner as the British troops on patrol in Northern Ireland I had seen in TV news programmes. I could barely resist the urge to run away, but fortunately, by the time they reached me, Hussey had arrived to introduce me to the lieutenant in charge and we began a tour of the buildings.

The tour was interrupted when we reached the large art room by the insistent ringing of a telephone in the staff room next door. Lifting the receiver, a familiar voice said simply, "Veronica's in labour and if you want to see your baby being born, you better get to



ABOVE LEFT **Doreen Booner was one of the three women killed at Number 7 Ross Road West.** (Courtesy of After the Battle)

ABOVE RIGHT: **Doreen Bonner's husband, Harry, is considered by many islanders to be the fourth victim of the shelling in the early hours of 12 June. Blaming himself for not being in the house when Doreen was killed, and being unable to cope with their handicapped daughter Cheryl, within six months of his wife's death, Harry had also passed away.** (Courtesy of After the Battle)

the hospital now." I returned to the art room, threw the bunch of keys to the lieutenant at the other end of the room, and announced that I had to go and went.

I knew that Hussey would understand the reason for my abrupt departure, as he had already shown great concern about my wife's pregnancy, even offering the services for the birth of one of Argentina's leading gynecologists, who for some reason was aboard a supply ship in the harbour. When I had expressed doubts about how my wife might react to this – never mind the local medical staff – Hussey's response had been, "He will wear a mask; she needn't know who it is."

The teacher who had accompanied my wife to pre-natal classes could at least have been relied upon to get my wife to hospital in a calm and collected manner, but, unfortunately, he had left the Islands by this time. Not knowing my whereabouts, Veronica called upon the services of the headmaster of Stanley Junior School who lived nearby. He, being childless, lacked any experience of childbirth and, besides, his car was a little blue Mini, not best suited to the transportation of the heavily pregnant. I learned later that he was in a state of panic and kept asking what he should do. "Just get me to the bloody hospital," was the crisp reply.

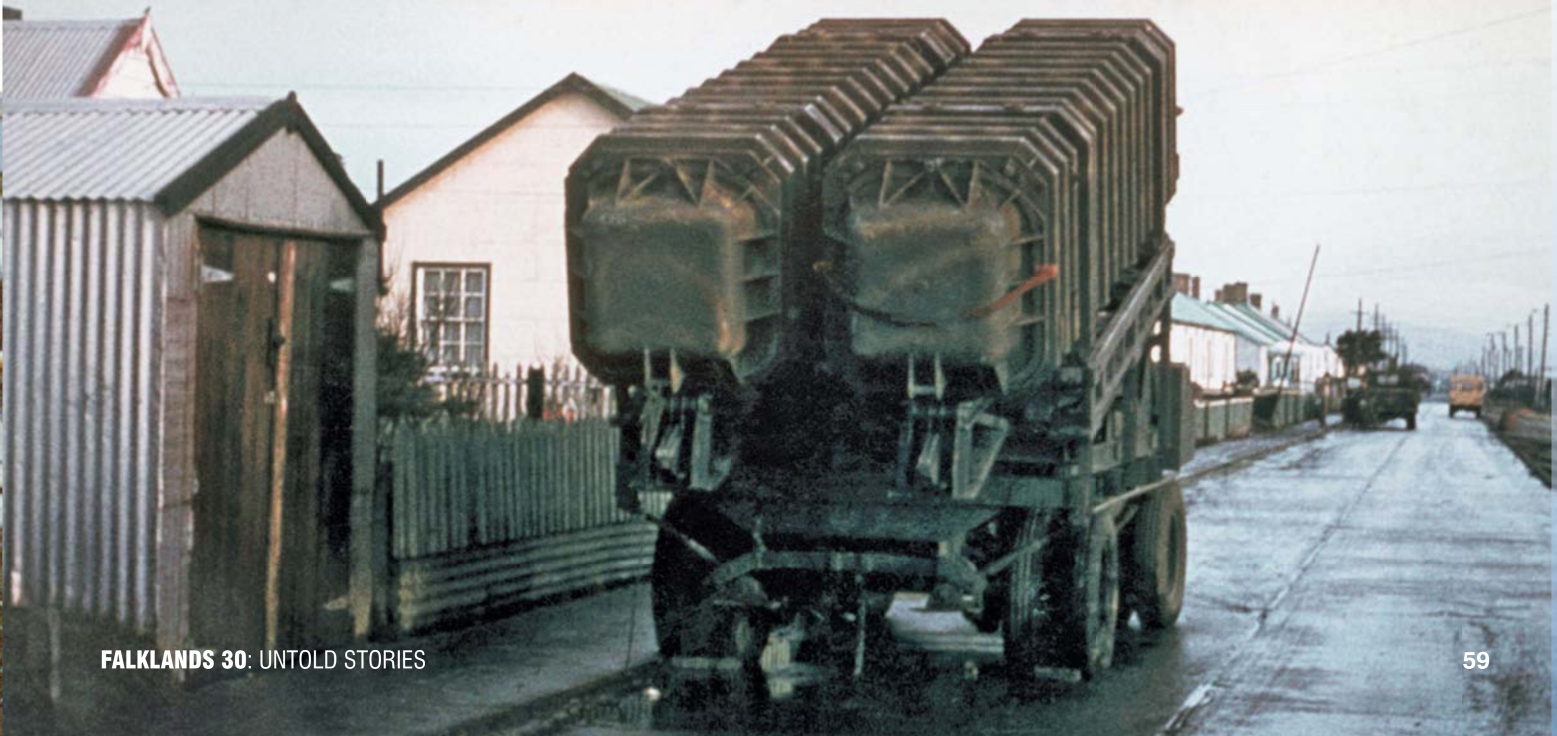
I arrived at the hospital to be told by the Senior Medical Officer that I might as well go away again as nothing much would happen "for a couple of hours". Knowing my wife's history of high speed deliveries, I opted to ignore his advice and, true to form, Daniel came into the world just thirty minutes later.

After the birth of our other children, mother and baby had spent a relatively relaxing few days in hospital, being looked after and choosing who from a stream of visitors they might feel ready to see. This was not so in Daniel's case. Due to the Senior Medical Officer's obsessive certainty that his hospital would soon overflow with wounded soldiers, both mother and baby were sent home the following day to make the best of things in a house where there would be plenty of visitors. Unfortunately these were not bringing flowers and chocolates, but an often incoherent and confused torrent of concerns about the immediate future and their personal safety. In these conditions, often of near hysteria, a new-born, if noticed at all, might be politely remarked upon, but was by no means the centre of attention.

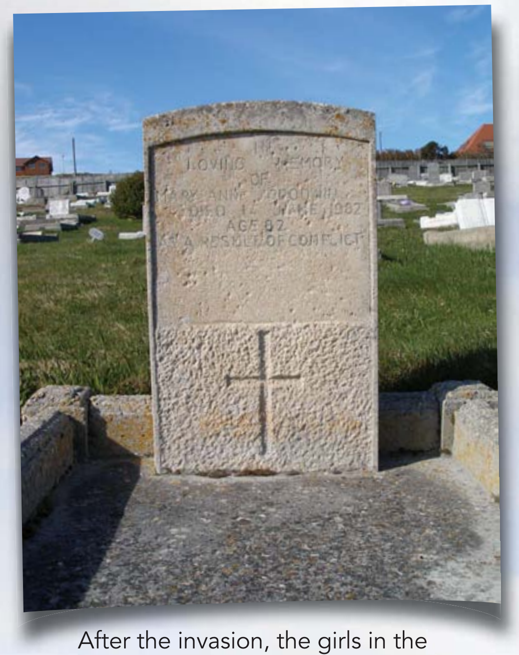
Our house, Number 7 Ross Road West, a sprawling, four bedroomed bungalow built to a British Colonial Office plan and formerly making provision for a live-in maid, belonged, not to me, but to the Falkland Islands Government and was the designated residence of the Islands' Superintendent of Education, which I was at that time. This accounted for the number of visitors, mainly British teachers on contract, who quite reasonably wanted to leave while they still could, before any fighting started, but seemed to want my personal blessing before doing so.

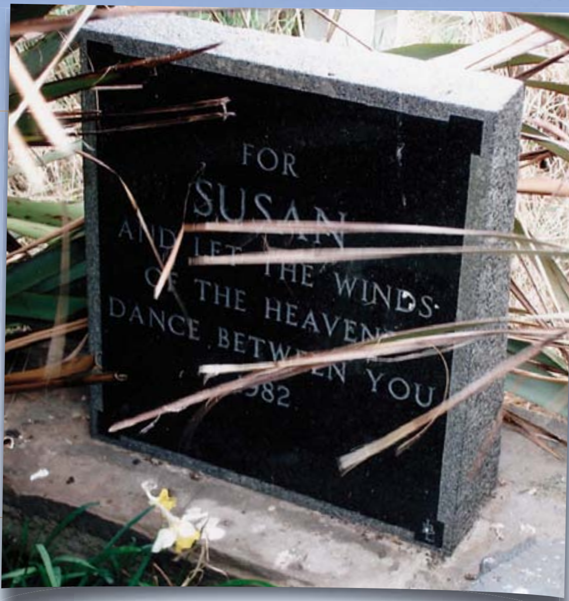
I had told them at a meeting immediately after the invasion that I considered they need not feel bound by their contracts any longer, but this was clearly not sufficient to absolve them of the guilt they inevitably felt at leaving behind pupils and friends to face an uncertain future. While seeking to explain their mixed emotions and to dress up their altogether reasonable excuses in a more heroic light, they were making considerable inroads into my stocks of gin. For the most part I was glad when they finally took themselves off and glad to be given the choice of any good things they might have left in their freezers.

Before the arrival of the Argentine forces, one of our bedrooms had served as over-spill accommodation for the girls' boarding hostel, which was situated just across the road at the back of the house. This was an arrangement which brought mutual benefits as the two teenage girls who occupied it could also be relied upon as baby-sitters for our two year-old daughter on the frequent occasions when my position as head of a government department demanded the attendance of my wife and I at official receptions at Government House.



BELOW: **The kind of target that was being fired at during the bombardment in the early hours of 12 June 1982: Argentine vehicle mounted Exocet missiles at Port Stanley. The missiles had been removed from A69 class corvettes in Argentina, flown to the Falkland Islands and mounted on trailers. Deployment of the missiles was limited to the Port Stanley area because the trailers and towing vehicles could not be used off road.** (Imperial War Museum, FKD2033)


IN LOVING MEMORY OF MARY ANN GOODWIN DIED 14 JUNE 1982 AGE 82 A VICTIM OF CONFLICT


FOR SUSAN AND LET THE WINDS OF THE HEAVENS DANCE BETWEEN YOU 1982

LEFT: **Mary Goodwin, seriously injured in the shell's explosion, was, at 82, too frail to withstand the shock and she died in Stanley's King Edward Memorial Hospital three days later. She was buried in Stanley Cemetery, her grave overlooking the seafront she knew so well.** (Courtesy of After the Battle)

RIGHT: **The third victim of the shelling, 32-year-old Susan Whitley, had worked in Stanley as a teacher in the secondary school. Following her death, her husband organized her burial on Sea Lion Island. People in her home town of Llandrindod Wells subsequently donated money towards establishing the Sue Whitely Trust which still functions to this day to encourage the children of the Falklands in her chosen subject – art.** (Courtesy of After the Battle)

After the invasion, the girls in the hostel, including our two boarders, went to the supposed safety of their homes on scattered farms and islands and, as the possibility of conflict increased with the arrival in the Islands of the British, our house, being of more solid, concrete construction than most of the houses in Stanley was one of a number designated as "safe" by a hastily convened Civil Defence Committee. Having already, on the night of the invasion, given shelter to nine people and endured the emotional outpourings of the visitors previously mentioned, we now began to acquire new lodgers.

Some came just for the hours of imposed curfew and blackout, like the Government veterinary officer Steve Whitley and his wife Sue, who returned to their own nearby house during the day. Others, like 82-year-old Mary Goodwin and her son Laurie, or Doreen Bonner and her severely-handicapped daughter Cheryl, stayed full-time, as their own houses on the southern fringes of the town were at risk from attacks by British jets.

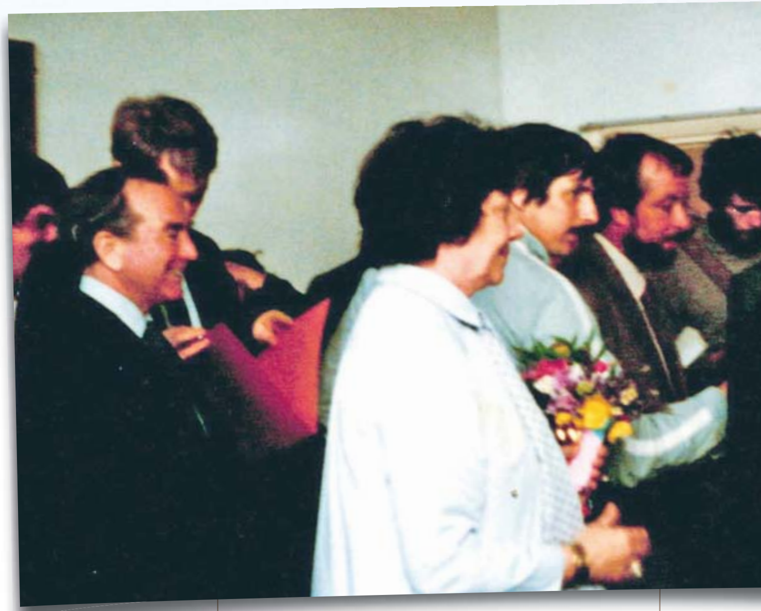
We were perhaps an oddly assorted bunch, expatriate and local, from newly-born to elderly and although we had known each other at least by sight, we would never have expected to spend so much time together. However, drawn together by our various and many fears, we largely got on, established routines and became a close-knit community. In a sense this coming together of the normally separate was mirroring what was happening in Stanley at large, where as the sounds of armed conflict became daily nearer, people normally only on nodding terms with one another were nightly bedding down together among the groceries in the West Store, in the lounges of the Upland Goose Hotel and in the corridors of the hospital.

By June 1982, aerial attacks and wild bursts of firing around Stanley had caused the abandonment of afternoon walks for me and my family. By this stage the only source of information about what was going on, even at the other end of Stanley, came from the BBC and my world had been reduced by curfews and blackouts pretty much to the confines of my house. During this time my emotions oscillated wildly between fear for myself and those few people around me, and a heightened sense of closeness to them.

As a child born in England towards the end of the Second World War, I had grown up listening to my parents talking about what they called simply "The Blitz", the period when certain British cities like Manchester, where they lived, were subject to nightly bombardments by the *Luftwaffe*. Their tales were full of midnight evacuations to damp shelters, privations, fears, lucky escapes, tragedy and near misses, but despite all of that, they spoke of this period with a degree of nostalgia that both perplexed and annoyed me. Now, for the first time in my life, I began to understand what my parents had experienced and to appreciate why in some odd way it had been "the time of their lives".

On the night of 11 June, or more precisely the early hours of 12 June, the small and relatively cozy world of Number 7 Ross Road West was shattered forever when a British naval shell exploded over us, filling the house with blast and shrapnel. Sue Whitley and Doreen Bonner were killed immediately, whilst Mary Goodwin died a few days later.

During the weeks preceding this tragic event we had become used to the distant popping sound to the east of us, followed some seconds later by a ground-shaking



ABOVE: **Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher pictured in Stanley's Secondary School during her surprise visit to the Falklands in 1982. Left to right (foreground) are Rex Hunt (Governor), Mavis Hunt, Patrick Watts (manager of the Radio Station), John Fowler, Tony Chater (local writer, artist & photographer) and Mrs Thatcher.** (Courtesy of John Fowler)

BELOW: **A somewhat distant shot of the Argentine forces in retreat, almost certainly on the 13th or 14th of June, that was taken by John Fowler from the hospital in Stanley.** (Courtesy of John Fowler)

crump to the west of us which signaled the beginning of the nightly naval bombardment of Argentine positions to the west of Stanley. Sometimes I could hear the whistle as the shells passed overhead, when I was not enveloped in the sense-depriving darkness of the air raid shelter I had built in the dining room out of tea chests filled with old clothes, books and peat mould and layered with boards and mattresses.

In this shelter, built, despite my wife's protests, because the solid concrete base of the house prevented me from making a bunker, I had slept on when a shell had landed in front of the house, obliterating a fence and shattering glass. Woken up by someone who had heard the explosion, I had reluctantly gone outside to inspect the damage and then, as there was no repetition of the bombardment, I had joined the rest of the house in the kitchen to have a cup of tea.

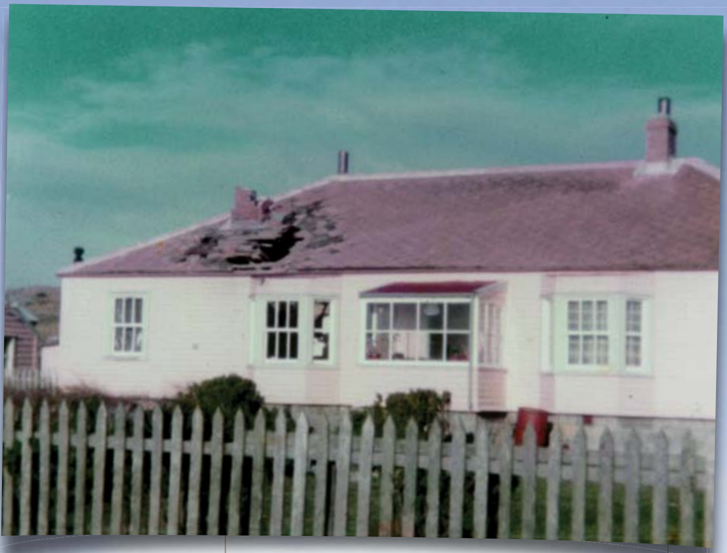
Having spent several frenzied weeks filling window embrasures with material calculated to absorb bullets from the street-fighting that seemed to be the inevitable conclusion of the British advance, I was extremely conscious that in the kitchen, which was at the end of the house from which the naval bombardment came, there was no such protection. I urged everyone to take their tea next door into the bedroom of Mary Goodwin, which being in the centre of the house, I had always considered as the safest.

Pandering to my concerns, my wife and Doreen had moved into the room where Mary was already in bed, followed somewhat reluctantly by Sue. Laurie was already in his room next door, Steve was heading into the hallway and I was almost completely inside the air raid shelter checking on my children when the next shell arrived.

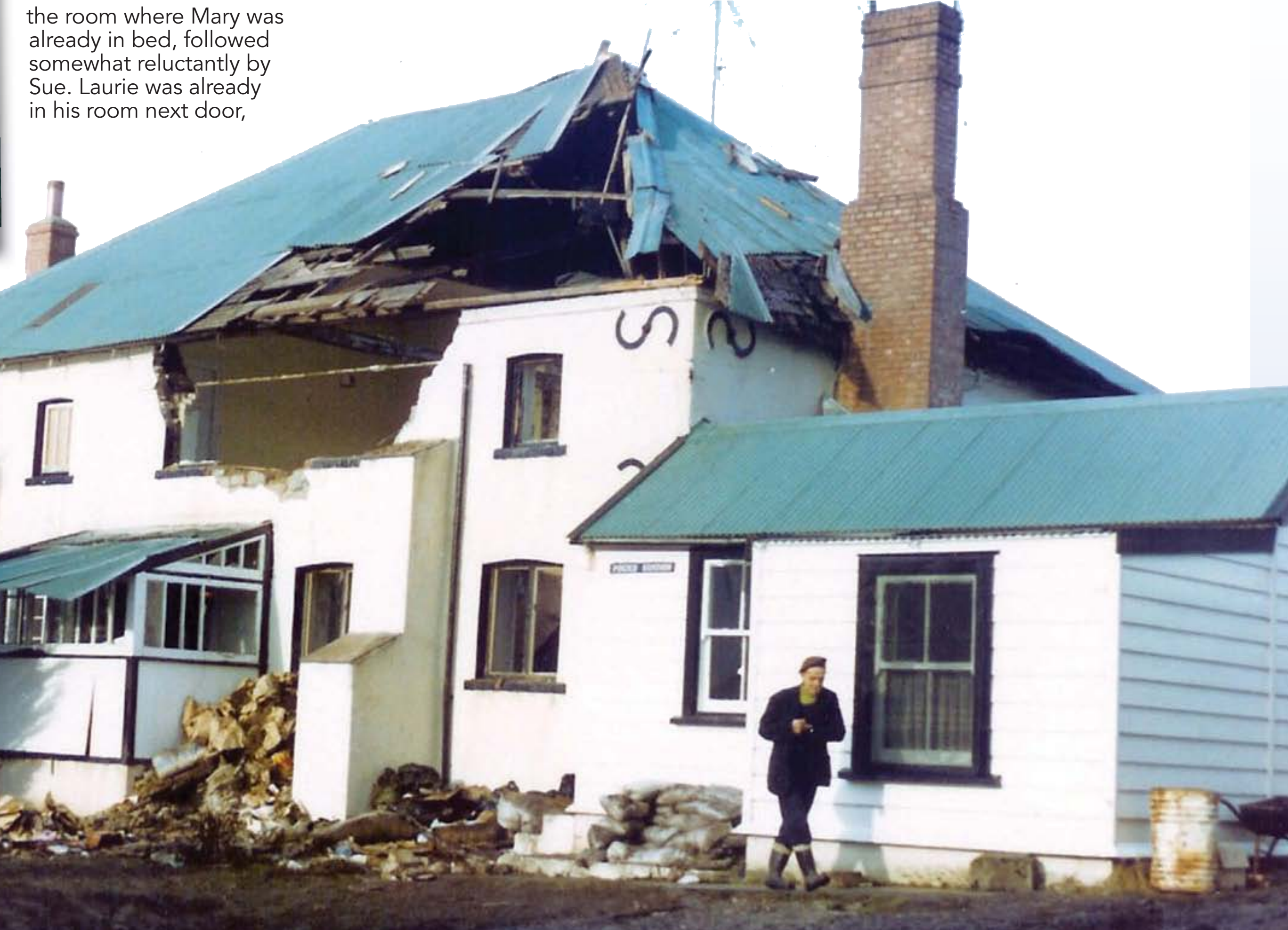
At such moments, as many others have testified, time seems to be arrested. It seemed that I had time not only to appreciate the sheer volume of the eerie whistle that the shell made, but also to know, absolutely, that it could have only one possible destination, before the world itself became all noise.

Fortunately, if that is the appropriate word to use in such tragic circumstances, the projectile was what is known as an "air burst shell" primed to explode above a target, showering it with a rain of hot metal. Had it been of the sort that pierces its target before exploding, I doubt whether any one of us would have survived. As it was, Doreen, who was lying on the floor embraced by my wife, had her life snuffed out by a piece of shrapnel passing through her spinal column. Sue, who had been standing, cup of tea in hand, looking back into the recently vacated kitchen, was killed by the blast. Neither uttered a sound.

For my part, expecting at any moment that another shell would arrive to kill us all, I threw myself over my children to protect them. In the process I woke up my still-sleeping three year old, who asked, "Is this a bad day, daddy?" ■



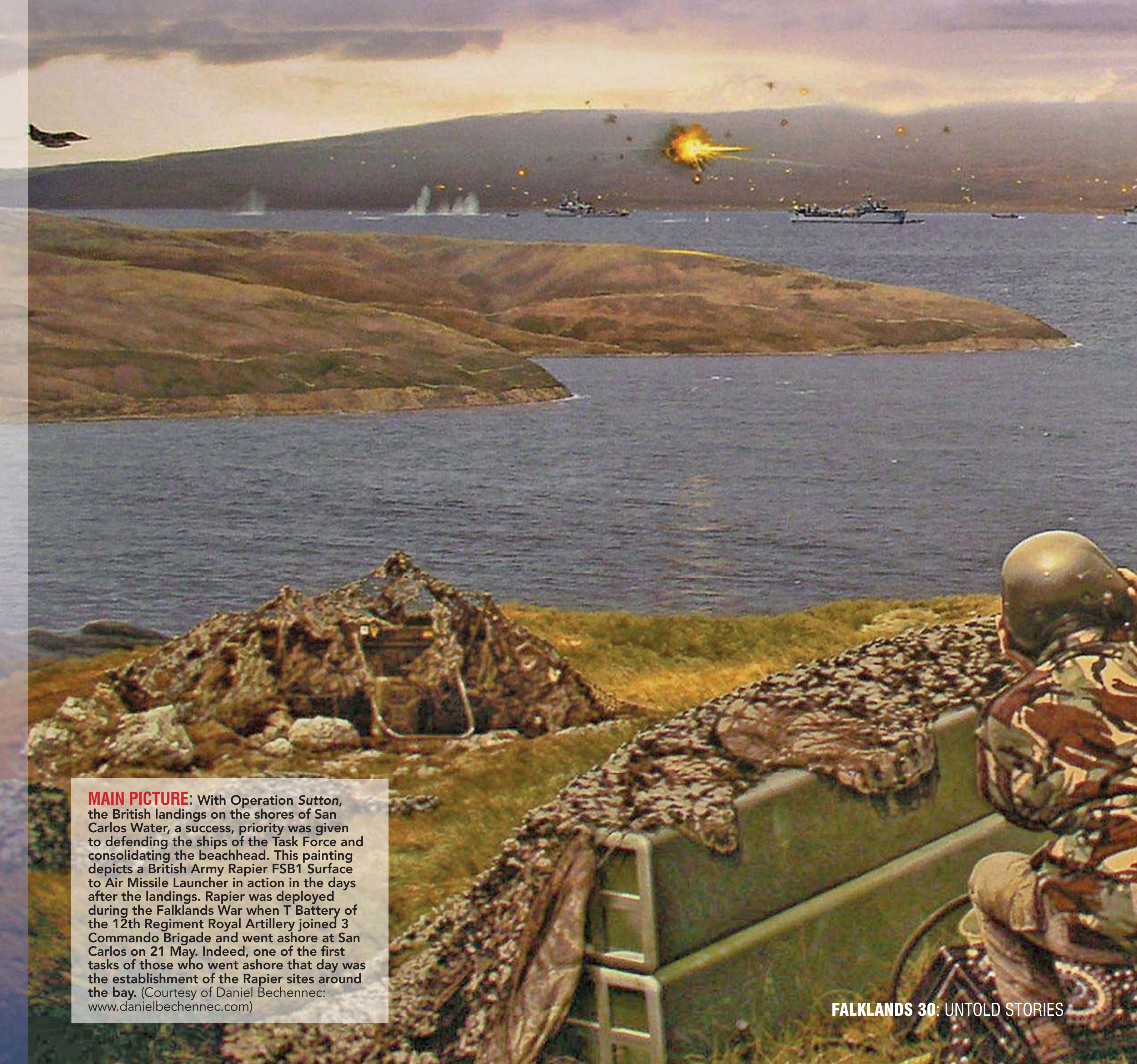
ABOVE: Another house in Stanley that was damaged by the fighting in 1982. This picture was taken by Tim Lynch soon after the Argentine surrender. (Courtesy of Tim Lynch)



BELOW: Only a matter of hours before the disaster at Number 7 Ross Road West, another building in Stanley had been hit by British fire – or, more specifically, an AS12 wire-guided missile fired by a Westland Wessex HU.5 of the Fleet Air Arm's 845 Naval Air Squadron. Flown by Lieutenant Peter Manley (the pilot) and Petty Officer Aircrewman Arthur Balls, the target had been members of the Argentine High Command at their daily command meeting on the morning of 11 June. The first missile missed the Town Hall, where it was believed that the briefing was taking place, roared across Ross Road, and slammed into the Police Station – seen here in the aftermath. The second missile dived into the sea off Stanley's waterfront. When he visited Stanley on 14 June, Peter Manley noted that "the Town Hall looked in rude health but the Police Station was not so, although the walls were intact with a small entry hole the interior was trashed – typical of an AS12 designed delayed detonation after piercing the outer shell". (With the kind permission of Andy Loveley)

VITAL INTELLIGENCE

The first step in recovering the Falkland Islands was to establish a secure beachhead to enable the ground forces to land. The chosen spot, San Carlos Bay, was defended by the men of the 25th Infantry Regiment commanded by *Premier Teniente* Carlos Esteban. His handwritten report on the battle was found during a subsequent search of the Argentine positions. Its contents provided a vital piece of information which changed the way helicopters were used by the British forces for the rest of the campaign. Nick Van Der Bijl, an Intelligence Corps Staff Sergeant serving with the headquarters of 3 Commando Brigade during the conflict, was there that day.



MAIN PICTURE: **With Operation *Sutton*, the British landings on the shores of San Carlos Water, a success, priority was given to defending the ships of the Task Force and consolidating the beachhead. This painting depicts a British Army Rapier FSB1 Surface to Air Missile Launcher in action in the days after the landings. Rapier was deployed during the Falklands War when T Battery of the 12th Regiment Royal Artillery joined 3 Commando Brigade and went ashore at San Carlos on 21 May. Indeed, one of the first tasks of those who went ashore that day was the establishment of the Rapier sites around the bay.** (Courtesy of Daniel Bechennec: www.danielbechennec.com)

They knew the British were coming, but the vital question was where would they land? An Argentine intelligence assessment of the British strategy to recover the Falklands suggested that it would either be a high-risk direct assault against Stanley or a low-risk amphibious landing north-east of Stanley with a view to gaining a bargaining position. San Carlos Waters was mentioned as one of three possible assault beaches outside Stanley.

It was evident to General Benjamin Menendez, the Army Group Falklands commander, that he did not have enough troops to defend every possible landing beach and reinforcements were called from the mainland. This took the form of the 3rd Mechanised Infantry Brigade, under the command of General Benjamin Prada, which established its headquarters at Goose Green and deployed the rest of its strength to Pebble Island, Port Howard and Fox Bay.

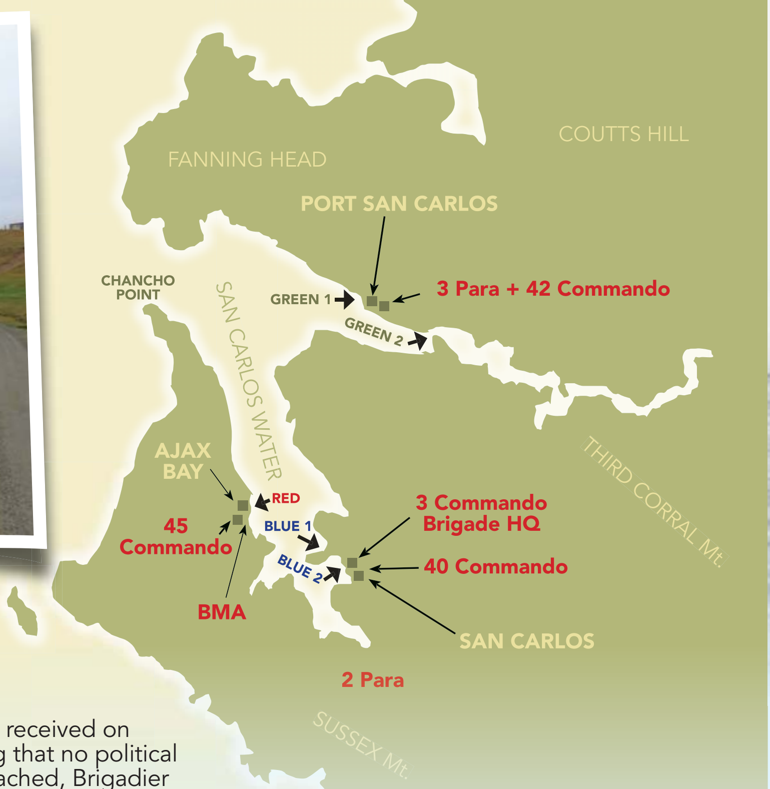
It was also decided that a unit should be placed at San Carlos where an Observation Post (OP) would be established using men drawn from a patrol base at Port San Carlos. The unit selected for this task was 'C' Company, 25th Infantry Regiment, commanded by *Premier Teniente* (Lieutenant) Carlos Esteban. The regiment was an elite body formed from Commandos and Airborne Forces personnel specifically to fight on the Falklands. Also placed under Esteban's command were Second Lieutenant Reyes's 1st Platoon and the recently arrived 'C' Company, 12th Infantry Regiment. Esteban's grouping was named *Equipo Combate Guemes* (Combat Team Eagle). Its missions were to: 1) Control access into Fanning Head; 2) Observe for enemy naval activity; and 3) Report on possible landings at Port Howard, Fox Bay and Darwin.

On 13 May 1982, the Argentine Special Forces' 601 Commando Company reconnoitred San Carlos Water by helicopter, being flown in two 601 Combat Aviation Battalion Pumas and a pair of UH-1H helicopters. Seeing no evidence of British activity, they established the OP and secured Port San Carlos. However, very poor weather saw it being abandoned that night with the Commandos sheltering in the Port San Carlos community centre.

When *Equipo Combate Guemes* flew in the next day, Esteban sent Reyes with a platoon of twenty men, an 81mm mortar and an 88mm Installaza anti-tank weapon to man the OP at San Carlos and patrol the immediate vicinity. For his part, Esteban remained with Company HQ, the Supply Section and a defence section at the community centre.

At 14.00 hours on the 14th, Brigadier Julian Thompson, commanding 3 Commando Brigade from HMS *Fearless*, issued the orders for the landings at San Carlos Water, though he did not specify D-Day – that was a political decision.

Information on some of the Argentine activity in the area had been intercepted



by British Signals Intelligence, these reports being confirmed by a Special Boat Squadron patrol monitoring San Carlos Water. A few hours later, a signal arrived in the Intelligence Section informing them that an organisation entitled "EC Guemes" had arrived at San Carlos Water. There was no explanation of what the title of the organisation meant, but its purpose was obvious – it was an OP watching San Carlos Water and North Falklands Sound.

This was a problem as it now appeared that the British would be approaching the landing beaches from the north against an unknown enemy. The immediate concern was the implications of the initials EC – until Captain Rod Bell solved the problem: "That's easy. EC stands for *Equipo Combate* which translates into 'Combat Team'". It was therefore assumed to be a company strength unit on Fanning Head, until another signal arrived indicating a patrol base at Port San Carlos. This implied that it probably had support weapons covering the neck of San Carlos Water.

The Argentine OP was nicknamed the "Fanning Head Mob" and its presence made Brigadier Thompson change his landing plans. The men of 40 Commando and 2 Para were to now land on Red Beach, with the latter being detailed to seize Sussex Mountains and block exploitation from Goose Green. For the SBS, their top priority was to neutralise the Fanning Head Mob. Interestingly, the Argentine Command Post appears not to have been spotted.

The plans having been set, all that was now required was the signal from London to commence the operation.

*

When the signal was received on 19 May 1982, indicating that no political agreement could be reached, Brigadier Thompson ordered Captain Mike Samuelson, his Operations Officer, to signal "OPGEN Mike" (the detailed plans for landing craft and helicopter timings) and D-Day as Friday, 21 May. H-Hour was set for 02.30 hours local time.

Next day, the British Carrier Battle Group joined forces with the Landing Force for the first time. These were the words that Staff Sergeant Nick Van Der Bijl recorded of that fateful morning: "20 May (D-1) broke with grey skies and the prospect of bad weather. None of the incoming signals mentioned major activity from Task Force Mercedes.[1] Would we get away with it? Radio silence had been imposed anyway and dissemination of information was impossible.

"The wind droned and whistled through the rigging and stanchions. Our convoy was in a close air defence formation with warships, logistic ships and merchantmen challenging ranks of restless waves. Ahead, *Canberra* nonchalantly cast aside the seas while *Fearless* lurched, bows lifting high and then crashing down, throwing aside great sheets of water. As 'goffers' [waves] smashed against the bridge, Oerliken gunners and lookouts ducked. Signal lamps flickered from distant destroyers on the misty flanks. Meals of unappetising mugs of meat and beans with a roll were known as Action Messing, hardly meriting the wait in the queue. I was getting hungry. It would be good to eat compo rations when we were ashore. As night fell, the gale blew itself out."

After dark, the Landing Group crept into Falkland Sound and lurked outside San Carlos Water. The County-class destroyer HMS *Antrim* launched its 737 Naval Air Squadron (NAS) Wessex HAS3, XP142, affectionately named "Humphrey", for a thermal imaging recce of Fanning Head. This showed the OP and its base, fifteen yards to the north, as clusters of bright glow worms.

At about 01.00 hours on 21 May, 3 SBS, a 148 (Meiktila) Commando Forward Observation Battery naval gunfire support team, commanded by Captain Hugh McManners, and Captain Bell, with a loudspeaker, climbed into a 846 NAS Sea King. The payload proved to be too heavy and it took four lifts before the thirty-five strong force was crouched 1,000 yards north-west of Findlay Rocks and 6,500 yards from Fanning Head. It was very cold and the troops chilled when they stopped.

On Fanning Head, at about 02.25

hours, a sentry heard the helicopter activity and woke Second Lieutenant Reyes informing him that he also had seen activity at sea. Reyes ordered the Installaza to be fired speculatively into the Narrows and although there was no reaction, he radioed Esteban at the Command Post about the reports.

The SBS had covered about 2,000 yards when the Installaza opened fire. Five minutes later Captain McManners radioed HMS *Antrim*, six miles to the south, for ranging shots, but the destroyer's twin 4.5-inch guns hit a snag. A SBS mortarman then used his mortar, but impatience overruled prudence and the twenty bombs fired were ineffectual.

At this point HMS *Antrim* reported its guns were ready and, on McManners' order, fired two ranging salvoes. Over the next thirty minutes, the destroyer bombarded Hill 234 with 268 shells, mostly airburst at 500-feet, the rounds gradually creeping towards the Argentine position. Communications were intermittent and when McManners saw the flashes of the 4.5-inch guns, he ordered the patrol to take cover. He later wrote that he felt like "Merlin unleashing the forces of darkness".

"I was watching on the half deck and I saw the small blue navigation lights of the landing craft assembling at the stern," continued Nick Van Der Bijl. "Then the night was shattered by HMS *Antrim* opening fire on the Fanning Hill Mob. A few moments of silence, and then the crumps and flashes followed by the distant machine-gun chatter of the SBS attack."

Unable to contact the Command Post and with several casualties and the Installaza wrecked by *Antrim*'s shelling, Reyes abandoned the OP and led his men into Partridge Valley to the east of Fanning Head. From here they headed for Port San Carlos. Meanwhile, the SBS followed the bombardment and had reached the valley where they spread out along the ridge. As they did so, two files of Argentine soldiers marched over the spur and stopped.

The SBS decided to invite the enemy to surrender using the loudspeaker, but the strong wind rendered it useless. A stream of tracker was aimed at the Argentine troops from an Armalite with a night scope and a GPMG firing a burst of tracer over their heads. A short fire fight developed, confounding the theory that that the Argentines would not make a stand, though another Armalite burst caused several Argentines to surrender. Nevertheless, Reyes continued to probe for a way through the line of GPMGs.

At his Command Post, Lieutenant Esteban heard the shelling. Unable to raise Reyes, he ordered his men to "Grey Alert". As dawn broke at 06.30 hours on 21 May, he deployed observers to overlook San Carlos Water, which became crisp and bright with the rising sun. When, at 08.10 hours, he received a report that a large white ship (*Canberra*) and three warships were outside the Narrows, he saw them from the high ground behind Port San Carlos.

Ten minutes later, noting landing craft leaving *Canberra*, Esteban reported to Regimental HQ at Goose Green that the landings were underway. At 08.30 hours, he received a report that Royal Marines, in fact 3 Para, having landed on *Green Beach* 2,000 yards to the west, were advancing toward Port San Carlos. With too few troops to resist and under fire, Esteban closed down his rear link radio and withdrew east to high ground 800 yards opposite Cameron's Point across the inlet.

*

A key feature of amphibious operations is air defence to protect the beachhead and the four Rapier surface-to-air missile launchers of T (Shah Shujah's Troop) Battery had spent seven weeks on the deck of a vibrating ship, sometimes in rough seas, with no opportunity to carry out the daily tests and adjustments to calibrate the firing systems. They needed to be landed quickly. At about 07.00 hours, two Gazelle AH1 helicopters, of 3 Commando Brigade Air Squadron's 'C' Flight, left RFA *Sir Galahad* to recce the gun positions. Both were fitted with a waist-mounted GPMG in their rear port doorways and were equipped with tubes for SNEB unguided air-to-ground rockets.

After clearing two positions, the two helicopters split up to escort 846 Naval Air Squadron Sea Kings flying equipment ashore. At about 08.40 hours, Sergeant Andrew Evans and Sergeant Edward Candlish, both Royal Marines, in Gazelle

PREVIOUS PAGE TOP LEFT: Bonners Bay at the southern end of San Carlos Water – the landing site for the men of 2 Para on 21 May 1982. (Courtesy of Jon Cooksey)

PREVIOUS PAGE TOP RIGHT: A map showing the landing beaches at San Carlos Water.

ABOVE: Three landing craft from HMS *Fearless*, carrying Royal Marines from 3 Commando Brigade, plough their way through rough seas whilst heading for Blue Beach at San Carlos on 21 May 1982. HMS *Fearless* is in the background with two Sea King helicopters on her flight deck. (Glenn Sands Collection)

LEFT: A view looking up San Carlos Water from the south. (Courtesy of Tim Lynch)

XX411, linked up with Lieutenant Ray Harper RN. Harper had taken off from *Canberra* in an 846 Naval Air Squadron Sea King, HC4 ZA296, carrying an underslung load of mortar bombs and a Rapier recce party.

The two helicopters followed the inlet and headed to Port San Carlos. They were spotted by Esteban. "At approximately 08.40, when a Sea King was observed flying towards the settlement from the east, I assessed that I was in danger of being encircled and gave the order to open fire on it; the helicopter veered away," he subsequently wrote in his report.

As Harper came under ground fire, and realising that he had overshot the leading company and was too far to the east, he warned Candlish of the presence of enemy ground fire. Banking through 180 degrees, Harper headed west.

"Almost immediately, the Command Post in the Community Centre came under fire from the west," Esteban later reported. "About a minute later, a Sea Lynx approached our position and loosed off six rockets. Concentrated fire was brought to bear and the Sea Lynx crashed into the sea."

This was not a Sea Lynx, but was in fact Candlish's Gazelle. Esteban claimed that it fired six rockets at his position. Ordering his men to open fire, six bullets hit it, wounding Evans in the chest and stomach and causing terminal damage to the tail rotor and gear box. Evans managed to level at forty feet above sea level and ditched about fifty yards from the shore. Weighed down by the GPMG mount and the lack of flotation gear, the helicopter quickly began to sink.

Esteban ordered his men to cease fire, but some of them either failed to hear or ignored the order and continued firing. Candlish surfaced first. As Evans surfaced, Candlish inflated his colleague's lifejacket and dragged him downstream to Port San Carlos, still under fire, where he shouted for help. But the beach shelved steeply and there was no boat to launch. The firing continued until Candlish touched the bottom and then several islanders helped him take Evans to the settlement bunkhouse, where he died.

"The crash of the helicopter marked our position and mortars fell on the position," continued Esteban. "I ordered another change of position to the east to avoid the barrage. As the platoon adjusted, another Sea Lynx appeared, opened fire with its inboard machine-guns and manoeuvred to fire rockets. Concentrated fire was ordered and the helicopter crashed just short of our position."

Hit from below and the starboard, the cockpit bubble disintegrated and Gazelle XX492 crashed upside down near The Knob, killing Lieutenant Ken Francis

and Lance Corporal Brett Griffin, both Royal Marines. It had been sent to collect information on the enemy.

Meanwhile, 3 Para was under pressure to clear the area and the 105mm Light Guns of 79 (Kirkee) Commando Battery, in gun positions near San Carlos, fired the first British artillery rounds of the war. Lieutenant Esteban again shifted east, at which point yet another Gazelle, XX412 crewed by Captain Robin Makeig-Jones RA and Corporal Roy Fleming RM, appeared. Believing that it was about to direct naval gunfire on to his positions, Esteban ordered his men to open fire; the helicopter veered away with superficial damage and landed on RFA *Sir Galahad*.

Thinking that Port San Carlos was now occupied by two infantry companies and with more British troops being landed ashore, Esteban withdraw 2,000 yards to the east to secure a landing site for a heliborne counter-attack force reported to be assembling. From there he watched Argentine aircraft attack the anchorage. In a radio conversation, he instructed Second Lieutenant Reyes to rejoin *EC Guemes* but if this proved impractical, he was to wait until dark and return to Goose Green.

Since neither heliborne troops nor Reyes had appeared by 12.30 hours, Esteban assessed that his route to Goose Green was likely to be blocked. Consequently he withdrew by heading east, reaching Douglas two days later.

After a short rest he moved on to Teal Inlet where he commandeered two Land Rovers and their drivers to transport his men to Stanley. His men had not been paralysed by the fighting, as he thought they might. Apart from those missing after Fanning Head, *EC Guemes* suffered eleven killed, several wounded, (who were evacuated to a ship), and six taken prisoner. Two groups, including Reyes, were captured by a 40 Commando patrol on 8 June. These prisoners were suffering from trench foot, frostbite and hunger, having survived on Cormorants and sheep.

When reports circulated that the two British sergeants had been shot at while in the water, it was feared that the conflict would develop into a nasty affair, but this turned to be an isolated incident of inexperienced and frightened conscripts caught up in the maelstrom of battle. As an Argentine sergeant said, "What is the difference in shooting men struggling in the water to being under naval gunfire and cluster bombs while struggling to survive on the ground?"

In his hand written report, Esteban made the following note: "The helicopters spent sufficiently long in the hover for his men to bring fire to bear."

This was a key piece of information and the use of helicopters was changed accordingly for much of the rest of the campaign. Helicopter air observation and armed action by British light helicopters were largely abandoned in favour of casualty evacuation, communications and moving loads over secured ground. ■

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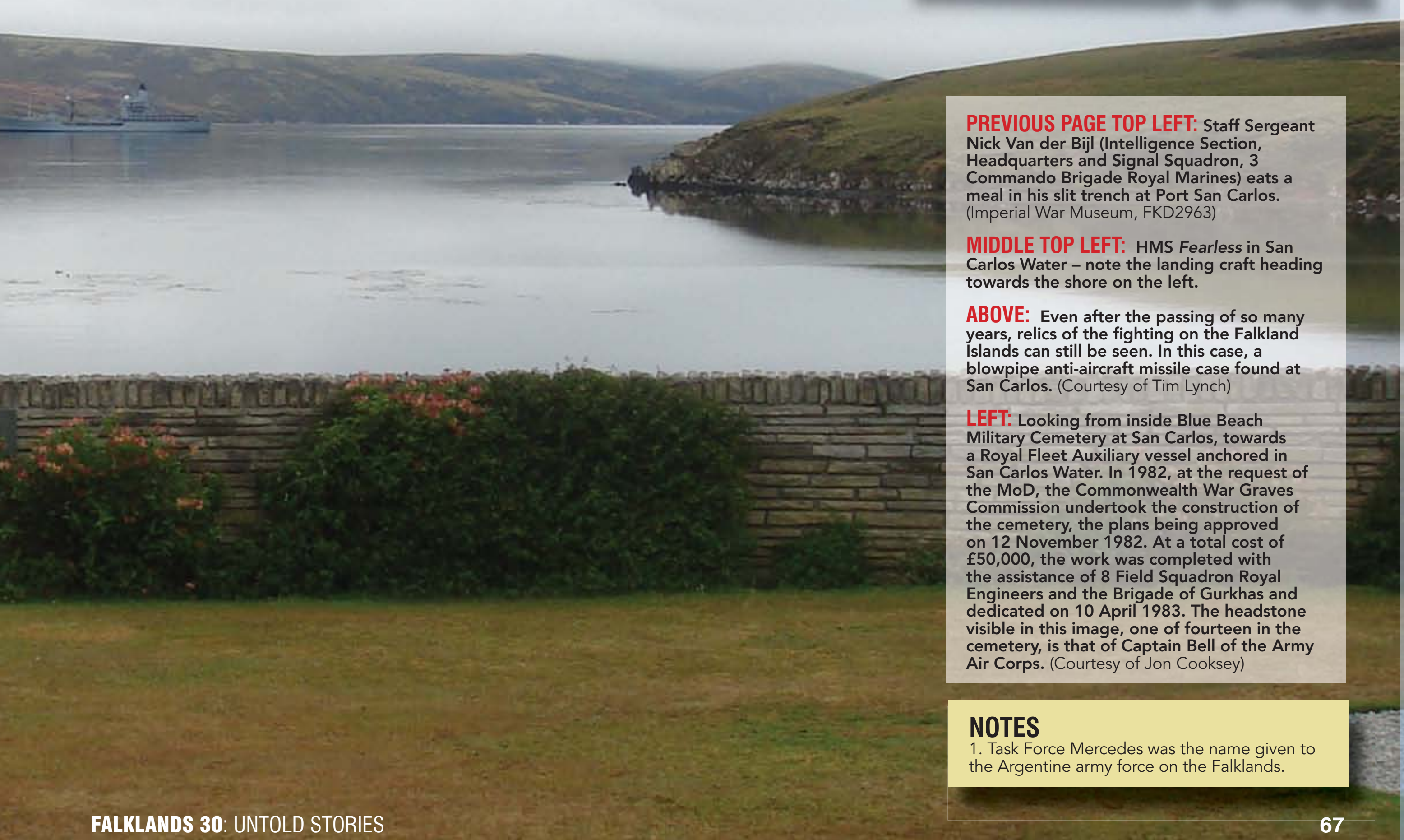


PREVIOUS PAGE TOP LEFT: **Staff Sergeant Nick Van der Bijl (Intelligence Section, Headquarters and Signal Squadron, 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines) eats a meal in his slit trench at Port San Carlos.** (Imperial War Museum, FKD2963)

MIDDLE TOP LEFT: **HMS *Fearless* in San Carlos Water – note the landing craft heading towards the shore on the left.**

ABOVE: **Even after the passing of so many years, relics of the fighting on the Falkland Islands can still be seen. In this case, a blowpipe anti-aircraft missile case found at San Carlos.** (Courtesy of Tim Lynch)

LEFT: **Looking from inside Blue Beach Military Cemetery at San Carlos, towards a Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessel anchored in San Carlos Water. In 1982, at the request of the MoD, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission undertook the construction of the cemetery, the plans being approved on 12 November 1982. At a total cost of £50,000, the work was completed with the assistance of 8 Field Squadron Royal Engineers and the Brigade of Gurkhas and dedicated on 10 April 1983. The headstone visible in this image, one of fourteen in the cemetery, is that of Captain Bell of the Army Air Corps.** (Courtesy of Jon Cooksey)

NOTES

1. Task Force Mercedes was the name given to the Argentine army force on the Falklands.

TARGET GIBRALTAR: OPERATION ALGECRAS

In early April 1982, with international tensions running high and the British Task Force forging its way south across the Atlantic Ocean, Admiral Jorge Isaac Anaya, Commander-in-Chief of the Argentine Navy and one of the masterminds behind the Argentine invasion, summoned his head of Naval Intelligence to a meeting in Buenos Aires. During this meeting, reveals Dave Cassan, Anaya proposed a daring plan that would not only bring the conflict to Europe but strike at the very heart of the Royal Navy.

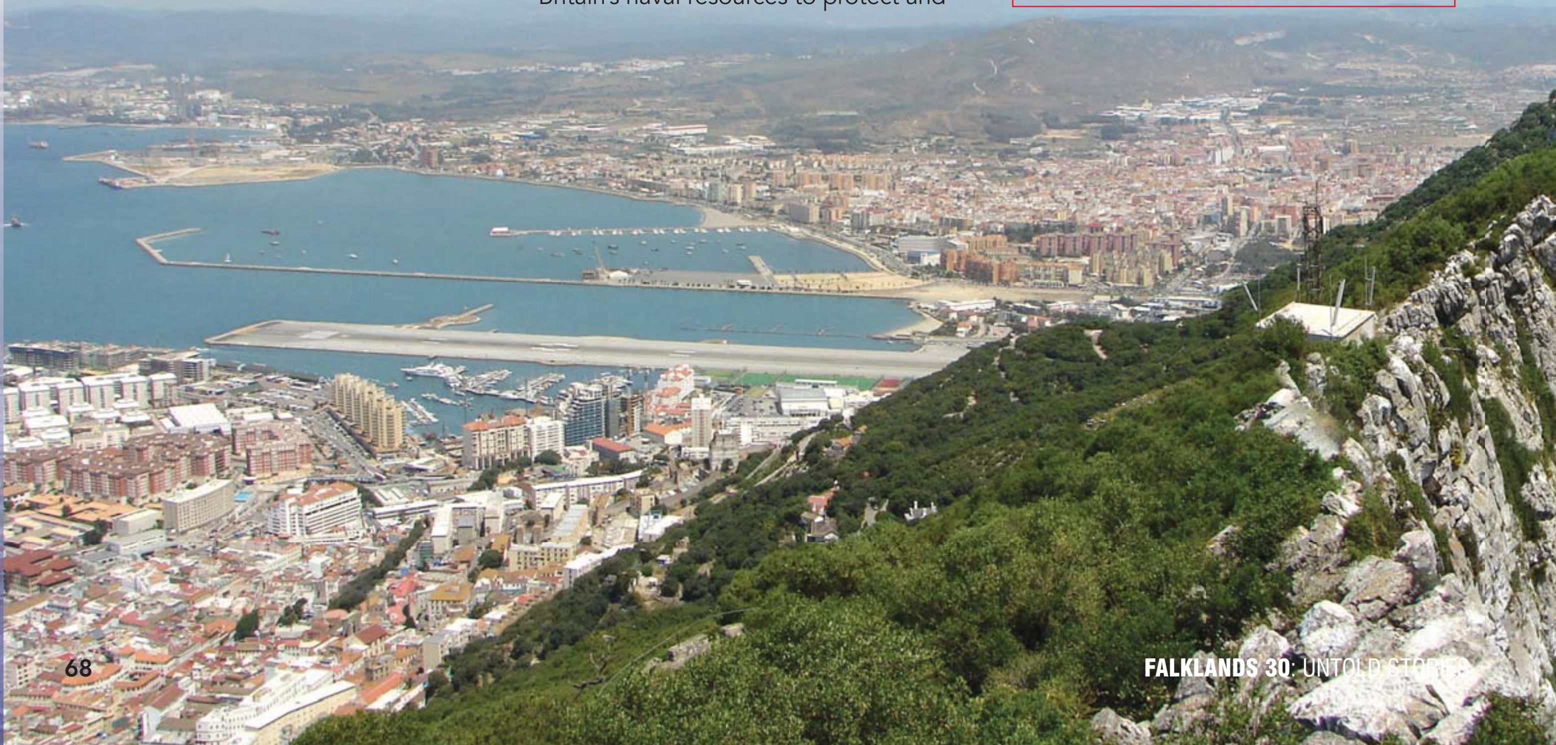
At this meeting Anaya instructed the head of the Argentine Naval Intelligence Service, Admiral Eduardo Morris Girling, to recruit, train, and equip a small covert team of underwater saboteurs for a top secret mission with the intent of striking against the British on home ground, attacking Royal Navy vessels as they prepared for war in the dockyards of Portsmouth and Plymouth. No-one within the country's governing military Junta was to be informed of the operation, demanded Anaya, not even the Argentine president General Leopoldo Galtieri.

However, as the two Admirals began to develop the plan, the difficulties they would face in getting a covert team into the UK undetected became ever more apparent. They needed to find an alternative.

It was during this initial planning stage that a new target slowly emerged, the Royal Navy Dockyard at Gibraltar. Anaya and Girling realised that a successful strike here would seriously disrupt the supply route from Britain to the Ascension Islands creating havoc amongst the Task Force, hopefully diverting some of Britain's naval resources to protect and secure its naval bases worldwide.

Such an attack would have to be delivered from Spain and even though it would be Girling's job to plan and implement the operation, Anaya, fully aware of the political consequences of launching an attack on the British from the shores of a friendly nation, insisted that he remain in overall command of the mission. Anaya also ordered that no vessel other than those sailing under a British flag was to be targeted and that the team should undertake no actions which would either involve or implicate Spain. Likewise, should they be captured they were not to reveal themselves as operatives of the Argentine Navy but claim to be patriots acting on their own.

Within days Girling presented Anaya with his recommendations for what was slowly being dubbed as Operation



MAIN PICTURE: **A view of the Rock of Gibraltar with La Línea and Algeceris in the distance. The marina close to the border with Spain, which is visible beyond the runway, was the original choice from which to launch the raid on the Royal Navy Dockyard. In the far distance can be seen the town of San Roque where Nicoletti and Marciano were arrested.** (All images courtesy of the author unless stated otherwise)

ABOVE: **Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessels moored in the Royal Naval Dockyard at Gibraltar. Note that the anti-submarine defences are open with the boom alongside the mole. Construction of the Royal Navy Dockyard at Gibraltar began at the end of the 19th century when work started on three large Graving docks which were to be known as docks Nos. 1, 2 and 3.**

Algeciras – a reference to the Second World War Italian mission of that name in which, as now, divers sought to disable the Royal Navy as it lay at Gibraltar. Although the primary objective of the operation remained the sinking of warships in the dockyard, using Italian-manufactured limpet mines, Girling also suggested a series of secondary targets. These included the destruction of the magazine, containing the Navy's reserves of ammunition, missiles, torpedoes and nuclear weapons, concealed in the maze of tunnels under Rock.

He also proposed an attack on the huge fuel depot carved into the side of the mountain and, finally, an attempt to disable Gibraltar's airport runway. This would disrupt Britain's supply route to the Task Force as RAF Hercules transport aircraft landed here, on an almost daily basis, for re-fuelling whilst en route with supplies and personnel to the Ascensions.

Girling also revealed the team selected for the mission. Leading the four-man operation would be a former spy and naval intelligence officer, Hector Rosales. Although Rosales would be in charge of the mission, he would not take part in the actual attack.

As the planning developed, the three remaining members of the team, the divers, were selected. They were Maximo Nicoletti, Antonio Latorre and a third saboteur who has only ever been identified by his nickname, "Los Marciano" (The Martian). All three had previously worked together on covert operations.

This, however, was no ordinary team of saboteurs for Nicoletti, Latorre and Marciano were all convicted terrorists who had previously waged a guerrilla war against the Argentine government. As members of the left wing pro-Peron organisation *Los Montoneros* they had been spared a life of imprisonment by agreeing to offer their rather unique experience in covert operations in service to the ruling Junta.

The man who would lead the dive team, Nicoletti, was the son of an Italian underwater demolition expert and, at the time of the British response to the invasion of the Falklands, had retired following earlier work for the Junta as a saboteur and a short – albeit unsuccessful – career as a spy, and was living in Miami, Florida. Such was the passion the Argentine people felt over *Las Malvinas* that Nicoletti had contacted the Argentine Intelligence services volunteering his rather specialist skills.

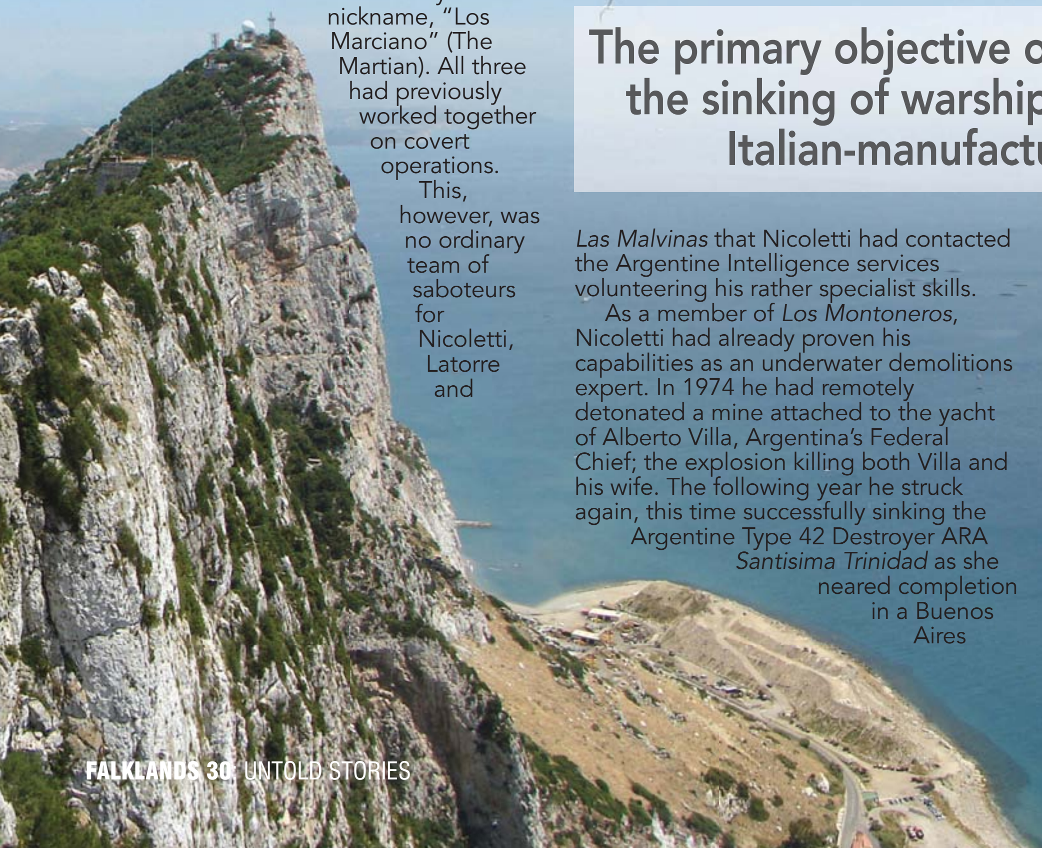
As a member of *Los Montoneros*, Nicoletti had already proven his capabilities as an underwater demolitions expert. In 1974 he had remotely detonated a mine attached to the yacht of Alberto Villa, Argentina's Federal Chief; the explosion killing both Villa and his wife. The following year he struck again, this time successfully sinking the Argentine Type 42 Destroyer ARA *Santisima Trinidad* as she neared completion in a Buenos Aires shipyard. During his career with the Junta, Nicoletti had also been recruited, and trained, to mine Chilean Navy vessels during a bitter territorial dispute between the two countries over the Beagle Channel, although this matter was eventually settled peacefully.

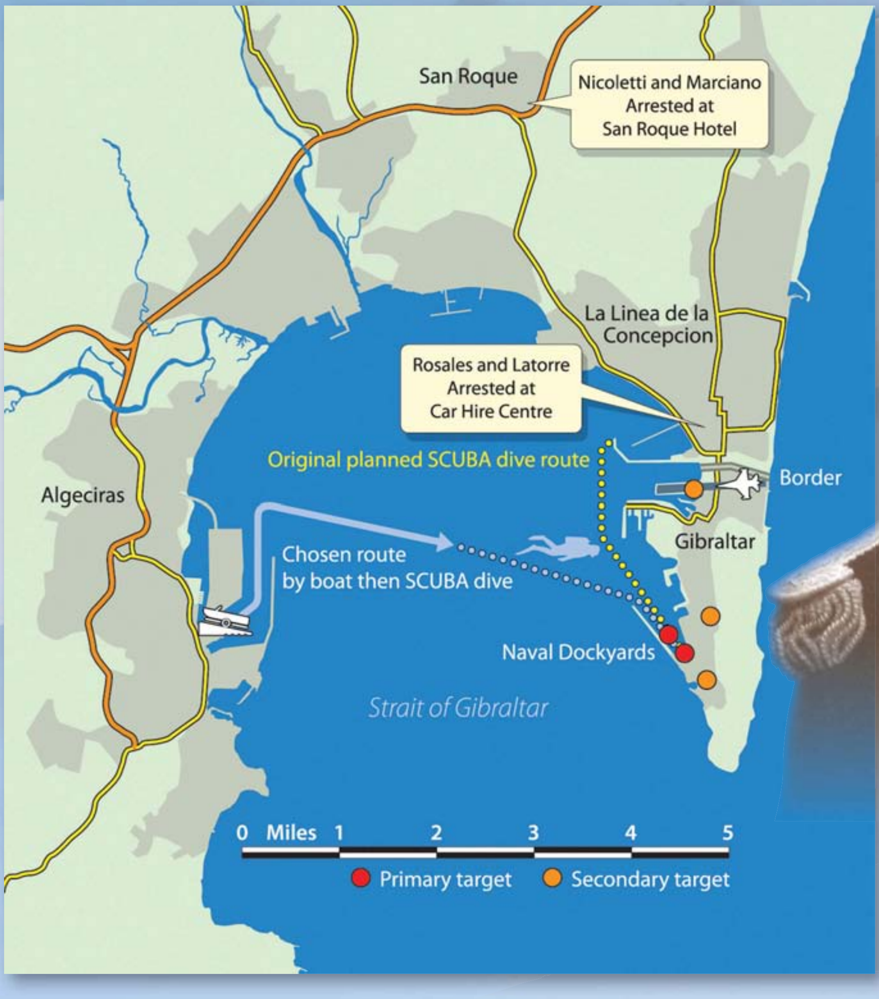
In order to maintain a high level of secrecy there would only be two other people with direct knowledge of the operation. They were Victor Basterra, another ex *Los Montoneros* member and forgery expert, who would manufacture false travel documents and counterfeit passports and, finally, a Naval Attaché appointed to the Argentine Embassy in Madrid – a man who has never formally been identified.

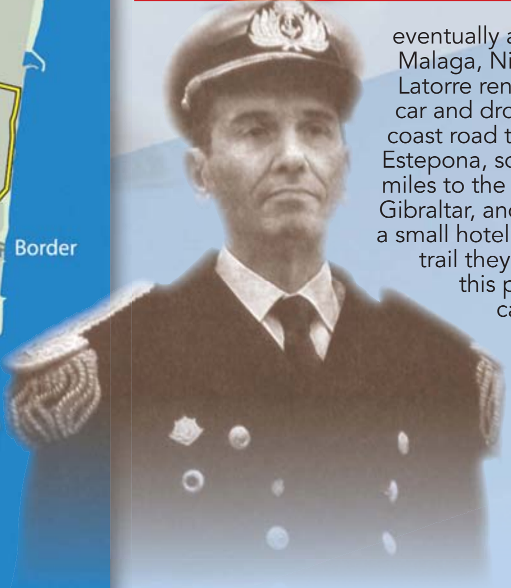
The primary objective of the operation remained the sinking of warships in the dockyard using Italian-manufactured limpet mines.

*

On 19 April 1982, the US Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, attempting to negotiate a diplomatic solution to the crisis, returned to Washington with the peace talks having collapsed. Four days later, on 23 April, the clandestine team (including Hector Rosales), travelling under their false identities, boarded an Aerolinas Argentine flight bound for Paris. Even though, when asked why they were leaving the country at this time, they




San Roque
Nicoletti and Marciano Arrested at San Roque Hotel
La Linea de la Concepcion
Rosales and Latorre Arrested at Car Hire Centre
Original planned SCUBA dive route
Border
Algeciras
Chosen route by boat then SCUBA dive
Gibraltar
Naval Dockyards
Strait of Gibraltar
0 Miles 1 2 3 4 5
● Primary target
● Secondary target



BELOW: Admiral Jorge Anaya, the man behind the invasion of the Falkland Islands as well as Operation *Algeciras*, photographed in 1976.

claimed they were travelling to Europe on a photographic holiday, not a single immigration official at Buenos Aires questioned why, then, they were carrying no cameras with them.

On arrival at Charles de Gaulle Airport it was planned that the four would divide into pairs. Rosales and Marciano would board a connecting flight to Bajaras airport, Madrid, and establish contact with their go-between, the Naval Attaché at the Argentine Embassy, whilst Nicoletti and Latorre would fly down to Malaga and begin reconnoitring the operational area.

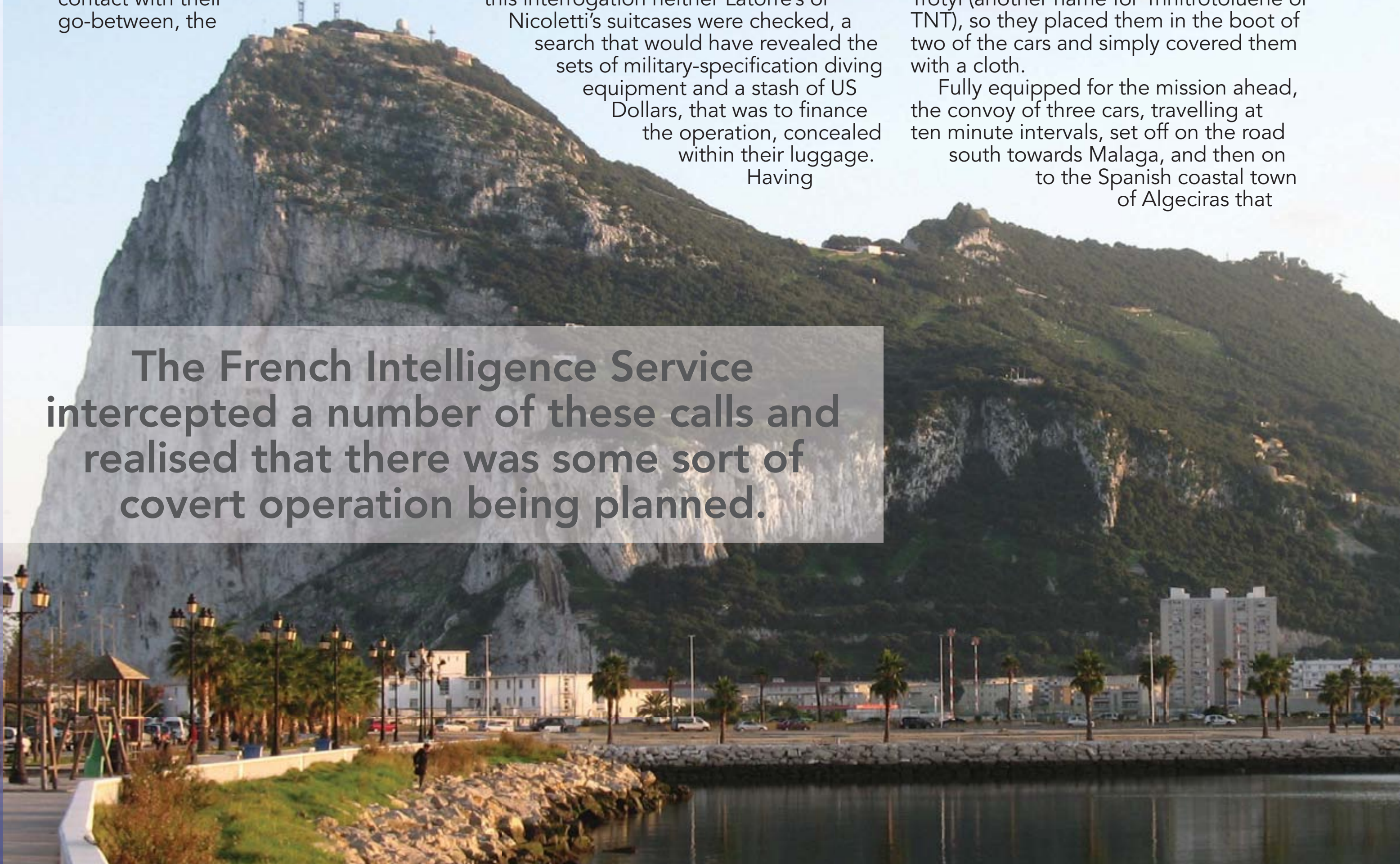
French immigration officials were initially suspicious about Latorre's passport, detaining him for several hours of questioning before eventually allowing him to re-join Nicoletti and board their connecting flight. Throughout this interrogation neither Latorre's or Nicoletti's suitcases were checked, a search that would have revealed the sets of military-specification diving equipment and a stash of US Dollars, that was to finance the operation, concealed within their luggage. Having eventually arrived at Malaga, Nicoletti and Latorre rented a hire-car and drove down the coast road to the town of Estepona, some twenty miles to the north-east of Gibraltar, and checked into a small hotel. To cover their trail they would, from this point on, pay in cash for all their purchases and transactions – a tactic that, though sound, would eventually lead to their un-doing.

Nicoletti and Latorre spent the next couple of days familiarising themselves with the approaches to, and the area immediately surrounding, Gibraltar. Having completed this task, they then embarked on the 410 mile drive up to Madrid to link up with Rosales and Marciano.

In Madrid, once again paying cash, the team rented an additional two cars to transport them, along with four limpet mines and a large quantity of plastic explosives that had been smuggled into the country via diplomatic bags, back down to the Spanish coast. It would be difficult to conceal the nature of the 60cm semi-spherical mines, each of which contained 25kg of the high-explosive Trotyl (another name for Trinitrotoluene or TNT), so they placed them in the boot of two of the cars and simply covered them with a cloth.

Fully equipped for the mission ahead, the convoy of three cars, travelling at ten minute intervals, set off on the road south towards Malaga, and then on to the Spanish coastal town of Algeciras that

The French Intelligence Service intercepted a number of these calls and realised that there was some sort of covert operation being planned.



RIGHT: Local fishing vessels crowd the waterfront at Algeciras from where Nicoletti and his team left daily on their reconnaissance missions.

BELOW RIGHT: La Línea photographed from the Rock, a view which shows the border crossing and how open Gibraltar's airport runway was to sabotage.

BOTTOM: Gibraltar photographed from Playa de Poniente, La Línea.

lies directly across the bay from Gibraltar. Nicoletti drove in advance of the cars carrying the explosives to scout the route ahead and warn the following drivers of any problems en route.

Politically unstable at the time, Spain was itself in a heightened state of security. There was growing tension and distrust between its civilian government and the armed forces which had, the previous year, attempted a military coup. There had also been a recent spate of terrorist attacks by the Basque Separatist movement ETA, and with Spain about to host the FIFA World Cup, now just weeks away, the country's police was setting up random road-blocks and searching vehicles.

It was not be long before Nicoletti encountered a road-check ahead. Having screeched to a halt, Nicoletti, undetected by the police, managed to make a U-turn and headed back up the road to try and warn his accomplices following close behind. His frantic waving was missed by the driver of the first car that sped past him on the opposite side of the road heading south – and into trouble. Nicoletti managed to catch the attention of the second driver and the two cars pulled up by the roadside and waited for any news of the other vehicle. A short while later the car pulled up beside them. The driver had seen the check-point at the very last moment and, like Nicoletti, had managed to evade the police. From now on they would have to navigate their way to Algeciras using minor roads and tracks.

*

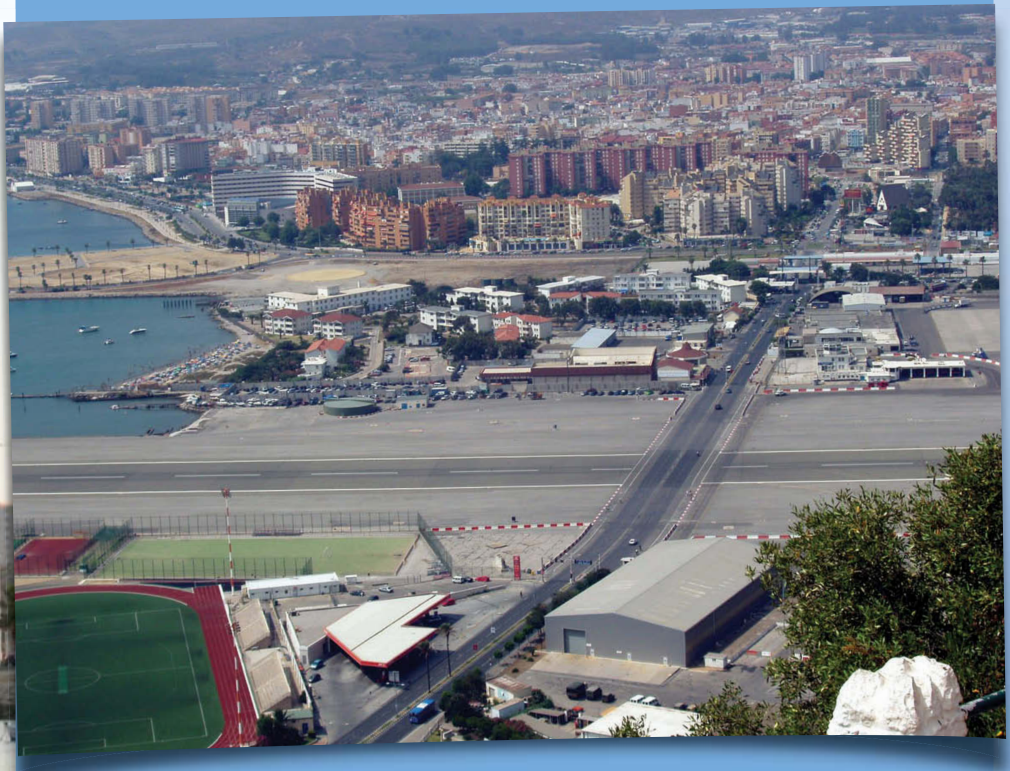
Checking into separate hotels, the four men, now using the cover story that they were on an extended angling holiday, purchased a large inflatable dinghy, outboard engine and fishing equipment. Launching from alternating slipways in both Algeciras and the border town of La Línea de la Concepción (more often referred to as La Línea) they began their painstaking surveillance of the sea approaches to Gibraltar, shipping movements, dockyard security, routines of the Royal Navy and RAF patrol boats and, of particular interest to them, the Rock's anti-submarine defences.

Over the next few weeks they regularly changed their hotels in the towns of Algeciras, La Línea and San Roque whilst renewing their car rentals on a weekly basis at alternative offices of the car hire companies. Two of the cars were used for general transport whilst the third, parked up outside one or other of the hotels, was used for housing their diving equipment, mines and explosives.

As instructed, Rosales, on a daily basis, liaised with the Naval Attaché in Madrid using public payphones. He did not call the embassy direct but, at pre-arranged times, dialled a telephone number registered to a private address in the city. The Attaché would then return to the embassy to relay all intelligence reports, requests and instructions directly with Admiral Girling in Buenos Aires.

However, within just a few days of the outset of Operation *Algeciras* the French Intelligence Service intercepted a number of these calls and realised that there was some sort of covert operation being planned against the British at Gibraltar. Even though the French had no specific details, this information was immediately passed on to the British authorities – who, forewarned, now faced their own dilemma.

Political tension was also high between the British and Spanish governments surrounding the question of the sovereignty of Gibraltar and with Spain a declared neutral state, Britain's intelligence community could not run the risk of being caught conducting counter-espionage operations on the mainland. At this politically-sensitive time neither could they ask, or even trust, the Spanish authorities to undertake such an



LEFT: The ambulance ship HMS *Hecla* pictured in the Royal Navy Dockyard at Gibraltar prior to sailing for the South Atlantic in 1982. The lead ship of the Hecla-class, *Hecla* was an oceangoing survey vessel that was converted to an ambulance ship for the duration of the Falklands War, work which was undertaken at Gibraltar.

MAIN PICTURE BELOW: Gibraltar from the port of Algeciras – from where the team would cross the strait on the raid.

investigation on their behalf.

Indeed, at the time the British were dubious about Spain's position on the Falklands crisis for, even though they were declared neutral, the administration was all but openly supporting Argentina's claim to the islands. There was now even separate, viable, intelligence surfacing which suggested that the Spanish military might try to take, and occupy, Gibraltar by force whilst the British were distracted by events unfolding in the South Atlantic.

Whilst information was being fed to the Spanish authorities, supposedly sourced from the British police, that a small gang of armed and extremely dangerous villains, who were possibly Argentine or Uruguayan nationals, were planning a bank robbery in the area, the colony's Governor, General William Jackson, put the Rock on high-alert. Additional security measures were placed at the border crossing, which had already been closed to almost all but pedestrian traffic, and he ordered an increase in the military presence on the streets as well as extra land and sea patrols.

Acting in response to the information about possible bank robbers that had been provided to them the local Spanish police force began conducting general enquiries throughout the area, visiting local traders and car hire companies and, as expected, asking them to be vigilant and report any unusual activity to them. Meanwhile, unaware that both the British and Spanish authorities were now looking for them, Rosales and his team continued with their sea-based observations and mission planning.

Even though the security of Gibraltar had been tightened, Nicoletti has since claimed that on two occasions he managed to cross the border to reconnoitre his secondary targets. As he feared, the security surrounding the Rock's magazine and ammunition stores, tunnelled deep into the mountainside, would prove difficult, if not impossible, to penetrate. However, Nicoletti said that he was surprised to find, at least according to his reports, that security at the colony's fuel depot was unusually lax and open to sabotage, with just two, unmanned, towers and a single guard patrolling the area. He also added that attacking the exposed airport runway would not be a problem.

In a rare admission relating to this incident senior MoD sources dispute this part of Nicoletti's account. They state that as the British were aware of a covert team in the area, those charged with the securing the colony, namely the RAF Regiment and 1st Battalion the Staffordshire Regiment, were on high-alert.

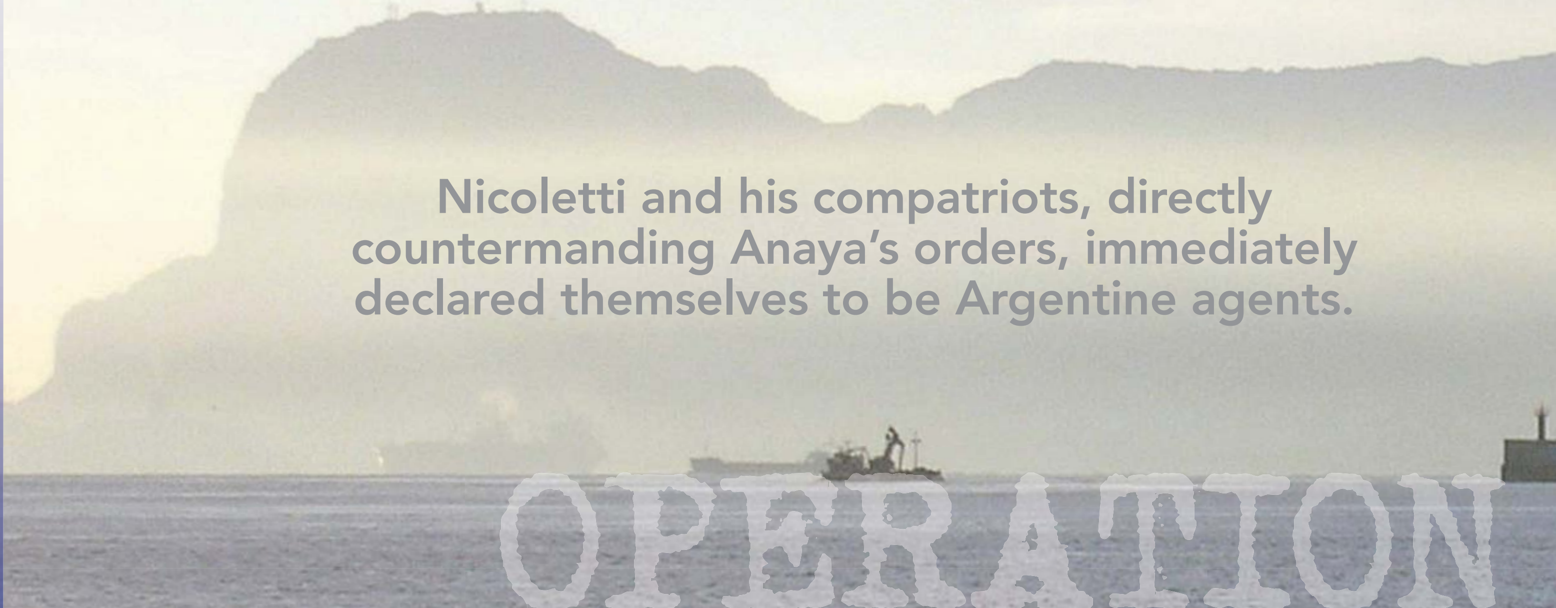
With the majority of the Task Force having sailed from Gibraltar at the beginning of April, Rosales and Nicoletti were now becoming increasingly frustrated at the lack of viable targets presenting themselves. The earliest request by Rosales, to blow up a small British minesweeper, had been denied by Anaya on the grounds that this was not an important enough target to warrant a first-strike, an attack that would, no doubt, plunge the two countries into open warfare. Then, a few days later, Rosales pleaded for permission to sink a Liberian super tanker, currently in Gibraltar, arguing that the sinking of this vessel could effectively shut down the dockyard as a supply route.

Anaya refused point-blank. Although Rosales' logic was sound, the political consequences of an act of open war against a non-British flagged vessel would be dire. So would the damage, both environmentally and to the Spanish economy that depended on its tourist industry, from the subsequent oil-spill.

On 2 May 1982, Rosales excitedly reported the arrival of two Royal Navy warships at the dockyard. These were the heavily-laden fuel-supply ship RFA *Bayleaf* and the Leander-class Frigate HMS *Ariadne*, the Rock's guard ship and regular visitor to the port. Rosales fully expected to be given the go-ahead.

"No", was Anaya's response – Rosales was stunned. It was believed that the Peruvian president, Fernando Belaunde, was close to brokering a new deal between Britain and Argentina and with these talks at a critical stage Anaya did not want to be the one to wreck the possibility, no matter how small, of a political solution.

Then, at 15.57 hours that same afternoon, the Churchill-class hunter killer nuclear submarine HMS *Conqueror* fired three Mk.VIII torpedoes at the Argentine



Nicoletti and his compatriots, directly countermanding Anaya's orders, immediately declared themselves to be Argentine agents.

battleship ARA *General Belgrano*. Two struck home. Just twenty minutes later the ship rolled over and sank, taking with her 323 souls. Unrestrained war was inevitable.

On 12 May 1982, Rosales reported to his contact in Madrid that two more British warships, one a Type 42 destroyer (subsequently identified as HMS *Cardiff*), had docked in Gibraltar. Permission to execute Operation *Algeciras* was immediately approved. The next day the team would strike.

That night, as the three divers prepared their equipment, Rosales renewed the car rental agreement on the vehicle they would use for their dash to freedom. The following morning the four drove down to the quayside at Algeciras to finalise their plan of action for that night's attack. To their utter dismay, however, their targets had silently slipped out overnight. This, however, was the least of their problems.

By now the owner of a small car hire company in La Línea, Manuel Rojas, was becoming increasingly wary of the four men and their habit of always insisting on paying in US Dollars, and not by credit card as would be expected. He also reported to the local police that they never seemed to arrive at the time arranged, either a couple of hours early or late, and that, inexplicably, they always carried keys from other car rental companies with them as well.

The local officer asked Rojas to inform him of the next time they were due in and, if possible, delay them there until the police could arrive.

A couple of days after the bitter disappointment of missing HMS *Cardiff*, the guard ship HMS *Ariadne* returned to port, mooring close alongside the BP-chartered oil-tanker *British Tay* that was taking on fuel for the long trip to the South Atlantic. Rosales and his team were determined not to miss out on this opportunity. Their plan was ready – they were ready – and the operation was duly sanctioned. The operation would go ahead overnight.

Their initial plan, which had involved launching the raid from the marina at La Línea had proven to be too risky. Even though it would have only involved a short, one mile, dive to their objective the probability of being detected as they entered the water in SCUBA gear was considered far too high.

ABOVE: The Rock of Gibraltar photographed from the sea – almost the saboteurs'-eye view of their target. The dockyard at Gibraltar is now operated as a commercial facility by Gibdock, although there is still a Royal Navy presence which provides a maintenance capability. Gibraltar's naval docks are an important base for NATO, with British and US nuclear submarines frequently utilising the Z-berths there. These provide both operational and recreational facilities for nuclear submarines, including non-nuclear repairs.

Instead, they opted to carry out their second plan. This entailed, at around 18.00 hours, Nicoletti and Marciano launching the dinghy from a public slipway in Algeciras. Having anchored up approximately half way across the bay the two would pretend to be fishing until the coast was clear. After entering the water they would breach Gibraltar's anti-submarine nets and swim the rest of the way to the naval dockyards. By midnight their plan was to have attached the limpet mines, which were fitted with time-delay fuzes, before, time allowing (they had to be back at the quayside by 05.00 hours to make good their escape), moving on to place the plastic explosives, in order of priority, at their secondary targets.

Having joined Rosales and Latorre at the waterfront they would abandon the dinghy and, if all went according to plan, be well on their way to Barcelona by the time the explosives detonated. From there it would be a short drive to the French border, Italy and a flight home to Buenos Aires.

*

That afternoon as the two saboteurs, resting before that night's mission, slept in their hotel room in San Roque, Rosales and Latorre drove the five miles down to La Línea for an appointment at the offices of a certain Manuel Rojas, to renew one

MAERSK
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ALGECIRAS

of the weekly car hire agreements. As usual they did not arrive as arranged, this time they turned up a couple of hours late.

A short while later Nicoletti and Marciano were rudely awoken by the sound of Spanish police officers battering their way into their hotel room. Even at this point the police were still under the misapprehension that they had been searching for a gang of would-be bank robbers. That was until they searched the car parked outside. Discovering military grade diving equipment, plastic explosives, detonators, oxyacetylene cutters and four limpet mines, it did not take the officers long to realise that they had been duped by the British – and that these were not the tools of common criminals.

*

During questioning, Nicoletti and his compatriots, directly countermanding Anaya's orders, immediately declared themselves to be Argentine agents. Under the instructions of Malaga's Chief of Police, Miguel Catalan, the police officers were told to extend all courtesy to the four men and to take them directly to his office for questioning. Having no training in explosives the police officers now sheepishly asked if Nicoletti and his team would be kind enough to disarm the limpet mines for them and then load this evidence into the back of a police car. The would-be saboteurs happily obliged.

Un-cuffed, the four men were eventually driven down to Malaga – having first been dropped off to pick up their dry cleaning from a shop in La Linea – before stopping for lunch with the officers en route. During this time Catalan had been in contact with Spain's Minister of the Interior, Juan Roson, to try and find some sort solution to the problem. They had come to a general consensus of opinion; all they could do was deport the four men back to Argentina – immediately.

At this point Spain's President, Leopoldo Sotelo, got involved in the incident. Sotelo, who was on a political campaign in the area when he had been informed of events, ordered Chief Catalan to have the men escorted to Malaga airport where Sotelo's jet, chartered for his presidential campaign, was waiting to take them on to Madrid. From there they would be flown by scheduled airline, still under escort and travelling on their known-to-be counterfeit passports, to the Canary Islands where they were go be released from custody and allowed to continue their journey home to Buenos Aires.

Meanwhile President Sotelo picked up the telephone – he had a few interesting questions he would like to ask of both the British and Argentine governments. ■

ABOVE LEFT: The RFA *Bayleaf* was one of the possible targets for Nicoletti and his team on 2 May 1982. *Bayleaf* was one of four vessels ordered from Cammell Laird at Birkenhead in 1973. She was laid down in 1975 as the *Hudson Sound*. When the ordering company ran into financial difficulties, the ships were laid up, and later were offered for sale or charter. The ship was finally launched on 27 October 1981, and when completed on 25 March 1982 she was then chartered to the MoD and renamed *Bayleaf.* (Courtesy of Nick Hall)

BELOW: Another warship that had passed through Gibraltar and come to the attention of Nicoletti's unit was the Type 42 destroyer HMS *Cardiff*. During the Falklands War HMS *Cardiff* was noted for shooting down the last Argentine aircraft of the conflict and accepting the surrender of a 700-strong garrison in the settlement of Port Howard.

BOTTOM: The border crossing between Gibraltar and La Línea, seen from the Spanish side. Nicoletti crossed the border here on at least two occasions to undertake his reconnaissance work as part of Operation *Algeciras*.

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THE BLACK BUCK RAIDS

The official summary *Lessons Learned during the Falklands Campaign* states the Falkland Campaign was "by any standards a brilliant campaign, marked by exceptional logistic planning and improvisation and carried through with outstanding skill and fortitude". The story of the RAF's remarkable *Black Buck* missions epitomises that description and upholds the highest traditions of the service. In presenting an examination of these raids, Mark Khan interviewed some of the aircrew involved in *Black Buck 6* – a mission that ended with an unscheduled landing in Brazil!

Just before midnight on Friday 30 April 1982, Flight Lieutenant Martin Withers and his crew took off from Ascension Island in Vulcan B.2 XM607. After an incredible 8,000 mile round trip, Operation *Black Buck 1* resulted in a successful strike on the runway at Port Stanley Airport. The only runway capable of servicing fast jets had effectively been cut in half by the first 1,000lb bomb in a stick of twenty-one High Explosive bombs – a remarkable achievement.

A second bombing mission, Operation *Black Buck 2*, was then flown by Squadron Leader John Reeve and his crew on 2/3 May. Aimed at the western end of the runway, the bombs narrowly missed the target on this occasion.

Whilst the bombing missions were being carried out, a different threat was causing the Task Force Commander, Admiral "Sandy" Woodward, deep concern. The Argentine air defences on the Falkland Islands were formidable and included a number of Light and Medium anti-aircraft guns, including Swiss-manufactured 35mm Oerlikon radar-guided weapons. The defences also included an American-manufactured Westinghouse AN/TPS 43 Search Radar. Whilst the radar-controlled guns posed a significant tactical threat to British aircraft up to 13,000 feet, the Westinghouse equipment was a search radar and posed a far greater operational risk.

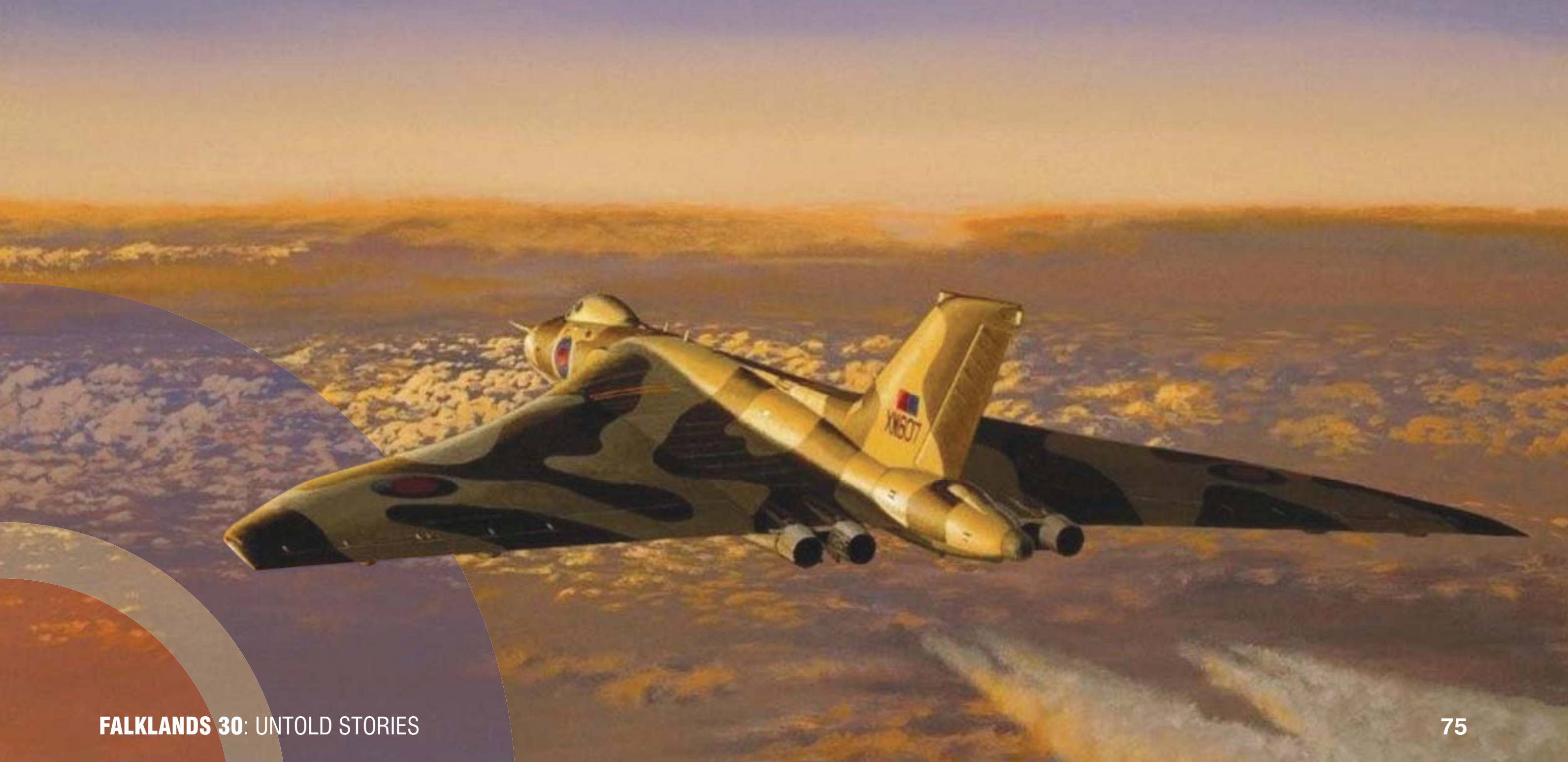
With its potential 220 nautical mile range, the AN/TPS 43 Search Radar could be used to pinpoint the Task Force at sea. Even when out of range, the radar could track the path of aircraft returning to the Task Force's carriers and make it possible to approximate the position of the fleet. This increased the threat of attacks by Mirage and Super Étendard aircraft armed with the deadly Exocet sea-skimming anti-ship missile.

The threat these radars posed had not gone un-noticed in the planning for Operation *Corporate* and action was about to be taken to attempt to neutralise the risk.

*

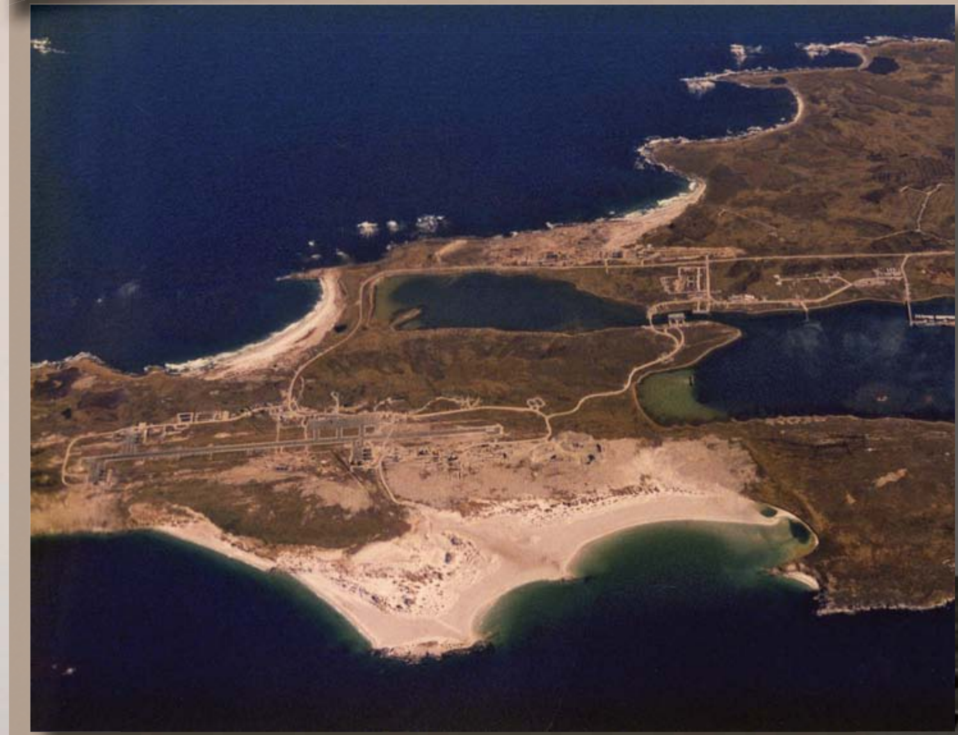
The story of how this would happen starts back in early April 1982. At that time the Avro Vulcan was due to be retired from service. The plan was to have completed the de-commissioning of all the Vulcans by June 1982.

The Argentine invasion of the Falklands would soon change that. The Vulcan was



MAIN PICTURE: The Falklands War led to the Avro Vulcan being used in anger for the first time in twenty-five years of RAF service. Aircraft from 44, 50 and 101 squadrons were involved in Operation *Corporate* with five crews selected, two from 50 Squadron (including that of Squadron Leader Neil McDougall), one each from 44 and 101 squadrons, plus others from 9 Squadron. This painting portrays Vulcan B.2 XM607 at altitude during the work up period prior to active operations. Limited edition prints of 'Corporate Prelude', by the renowned aviation artist Philip E. West, and signed by Martin Withers, are available from SWA Fine Art. For more information visit: www.swafineart.com

LEFT: **A Vulcan B.2 pictured at Wideawake between April and June 1982. One of the Air Bridge Hercules can be seen in the foreground.** (Courtesy of Bob Shackleton, via Gordon Smith, Naval-History.Net)



BELOW LEFT: **Port Stanley airport viewed from the north. Stanley itself is out of the picture to the right.** (Courtesy of Tony Dixon)

the only aircraft that had any operational capability to cover the distances (albeit with in-flight refuelling) involved in attacking the Falklands from a British Sovereign Base.

However, the Vulcan was designed for a specific strike role. Their crews were trained to fly below the radar horizon and attack high value targets within the Soviet Union by delivering a single tactical nuclear bomb. Suddenly, the whole situation had changed.

The RAF rapidly put together a number of crews who then went through a work-up to perform a completely different role for which they were trained in the space of just a few weeks. They would drop conventional bombs from medium altitude, using in-flight refuelling, having flown very long distances over

BELOW: **Vulcan B.2 XM612 pictured at Wideawake Airfield on Ascension Island. Along with XM607, this aircraft was scheduled to carry out *Black Buck 3* on 13 May 1982, only for the mission to be cancelled prior to take-off due to strong headwinds.** (Glenn Sands Collection)

BOTTOM LEFT: **Vulcan B.2 XM607 landing at Wideawake.** (Glenn Sands Collection) water – something that they had never practised for.

Training at night in the UK, the crews flew eight-hour training missions, navigating by the stars. Reaching the target location after eight hours they would switch the H2S radar on and check the accuracy of the navigation. Employing the same skills used by Second World War bomber crews, they were getting accuracies of between four and eight miles – a remarkable achievement.

Despite this accuracy using conventional navigation methods, it was decided that the margin for error was still too risky. As a result an inertial navigation system that had been fitted to ex-commercial Vickers VC 10 passenger aircraft purchased by the RAF would be used.

The pilots had to practise inflight refuelling – which had not been done in Vulcans for many years. The only Vulcan captain eventually chosen to fly on the Black Buck Missions who had previous experience of in-flight re-fuelling was Squadron Leader Neil McDougall.

For one 50 Squadron Vulcan crew, however, this conventional bombing role would be changed to another type of mission. Flying Vulcan B.2 XM597 were Squadron Leader Neil McDougall (Pilot), Flight Lieutenant Dave Castle (Navigator Radar), Flight Lieutenant Barry Smith (Navigator Plotter), Flight Lieutenant Rod Trevaskus (Air Electronics Officer), Flying Officer Chris Lackman (Co-pilot), and Flight Lieutenant Brian Gardner (AAR, or Air to Air Refuelling pilot). They had been ordered to switch to the role of anti-radar strike missions, their task being to destroy the Argentine AN/TPS 43 search radar.

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Missiles fired from aircraft to destroy radars are known as anti-radiation missiles (ARM). They function by having the ability to seek out the emissions of an enemy radar, locking on to the source and then detonating a blast fragmentation warhead to damage or destroy the radar. In 1982 the only such missile in the British military inventory was the Anglo-French Martel ARM.

> **After a night's sleep the crew would fly Operation *Black Buck 5*.**

The Vulcan crews would again need to train to undertake a mission they had never flown before. The aircraft also needed adapting to enable the missile to be fitted and operated by the crew. Launch pylons for the old Skybolt air-to-surface missile that had once been planned to be fitted to the V Bomber fleet were used.

Wiring looms and instrumentation were fitted and trials were performed to check that the electronics worked whilst flying at high altitude. The missile was live-fired once at a range on the coast of North Wales. The trial was successful – almost too successful.

It had been intended that the missile would fall into the sea well short of the target by only firing its launcher motor for a few seconds. However, things did not go according to plan. Even though the motor had only fired for a short duration, the missile continued to glide towards the radar target – locked on! It was becoming such a threat that the radar had to be rapidly switched off and the range hut vacated. The missile fell on the beach just short of the hut the target radar was located in.

However successful the test had proven, a number of concerns existed about deploying the Martel. It only had a probability of kill (pK) ratio of 60% and it had a very large 330lb HE warhead and flew at a speed of Mach 2.

Intelligence available from the Falklands was reporting that the AN/TPS 43 radar was mobile and there were conflicting reports of its location. One report placed it very close to Stanley itself. The risk of collateral damage with the Martel was deemed too great.

This problem was solved by a secret arrangement made with the Americans to provide the Shrike AGM-45 ARM. This missile had been used with great success by the Americans in Vietnam. It had a much higher theoretical pK (up to 99%) and a smaller 145lb warhead. This would work much better. Or would it? By the time the decision was made to employ the Shrike, there was no time to test it – other than in action. In a remarkable feat of improvisation and engineering, within just four days of the decision to use the Shrike being made, it was fully fitted to the aircraft.

ABOVE: Damage to the control tower of Port Stanley airport shortly after Vulcan XM607, captained by Flight Lieutenant Martin Withers, had completed Operation *Black Buck I.*

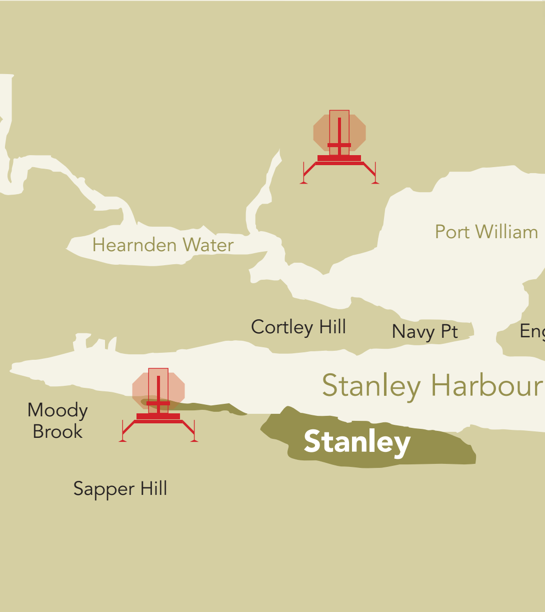
ABOVE TOP RIGHT: The nose section of one of the *Black Buck* veterans – Handley Victor K.2 XM717 – that can be seen at the RAF Museum at Hendon (where it arrived in 1997). XM717 was flown direct to Wideawake Airfield on 30 April 1982, immediately going into action as one of the eleven tankers involved in Operation *Black Buck 1*. Captained by Squadron Leader B.R. Neal, XM717 was airborne for four hours and twenty minutes. As well as other duties, this aircraft also participated in further *Black Buck* raids, namely numbers 2 and 6. The name and artwork of *Lucky Lou* was added during the First Gulf War. (© The Trustees of The Royal Air Force Museum)

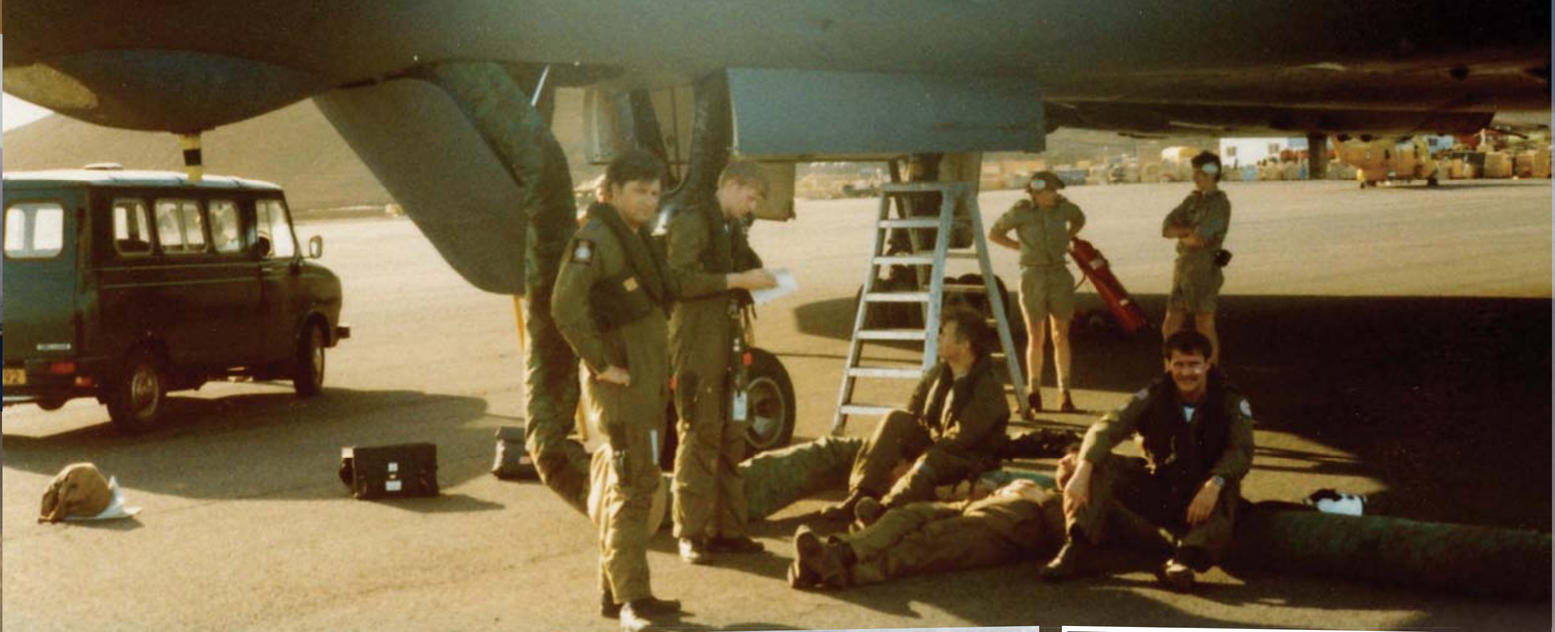
ABOVE MIDDLE RIGHT: A Victor K.2 tanker at Wideawake Airfield during the *Black Buck* raids. The Victor, built by Handley Page, was the third and final of the V-bombers which provided Britain's nuclear deterrent. Like the other V-bombers, the Victor was originally designed for high-altitude, high-speed penetration of Russian airspace to deliver its nuclear payload. The withdrawal of the Valiant fleet during the 1960s left the RAF with a shortfall in front line tanker aircraft. As a result, a number of Victors, by now judged to be obsolescent in their strike role, were re-fitted for this task. The first Victor K.2 tanker flew on 1 March 1972. The K.2s made a substantial contribution to the Falklands War, flying over 3,000 hours and making over 600 air refuelling sorties from Ascension Island. (With the kind permission of Dennis Gooch)

On 26 May 1982, XM597 deployed to Ascension Island, complete with two Shrike missiles fitted on the under wing pylons. Transiting out over the Cornish peninsula the crew was able to perform a quick test – they managed to get a lock-on to the air traffic control radar operating at RAF St Mawgan, proving that at least the missile and cockpit instrumentation were working.

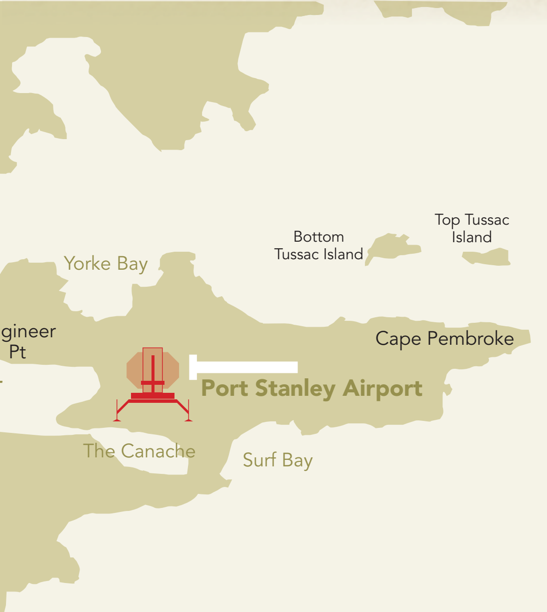
Arriving at Ascension Island the following day, McDougall and his crew were informed that their first mission was to take place the very next day. It was code-named Operation *Black Buck 4*.

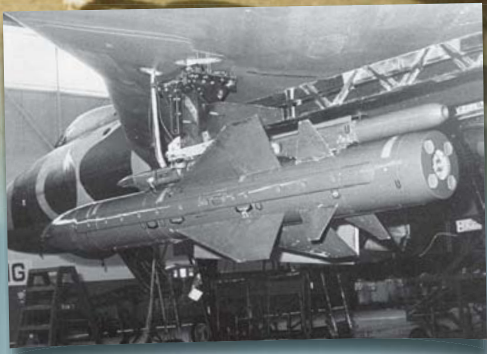
Taking off with its attendant fleet of eleven Victor K.2 tankers, XM597 was forced to abort this mission due to the failure of the re-fuelling equipment on one of the Victors. Returning, the crew was again warned that the attack would be attempted the next day. After a night's sleep they would undertake Operation *Black Buck 5*.

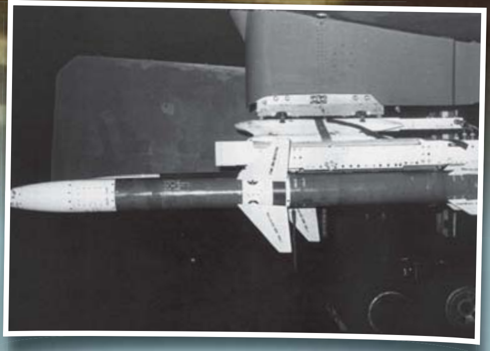




ABOVE: **The crew of Vulcan XM597 pictured beneath their aircraft at Ascension Island. From left to right are Flight Lieutenant Rod Trevaskus, Flying Officer Chris Lackman, Squadron Leader Neil McDougall, Flight Lieutenant Brian Gardner (lying down) and Flight Lieutenant Dave Castle.** (Courtesy of Wing Commander (Retd.) David Castle)







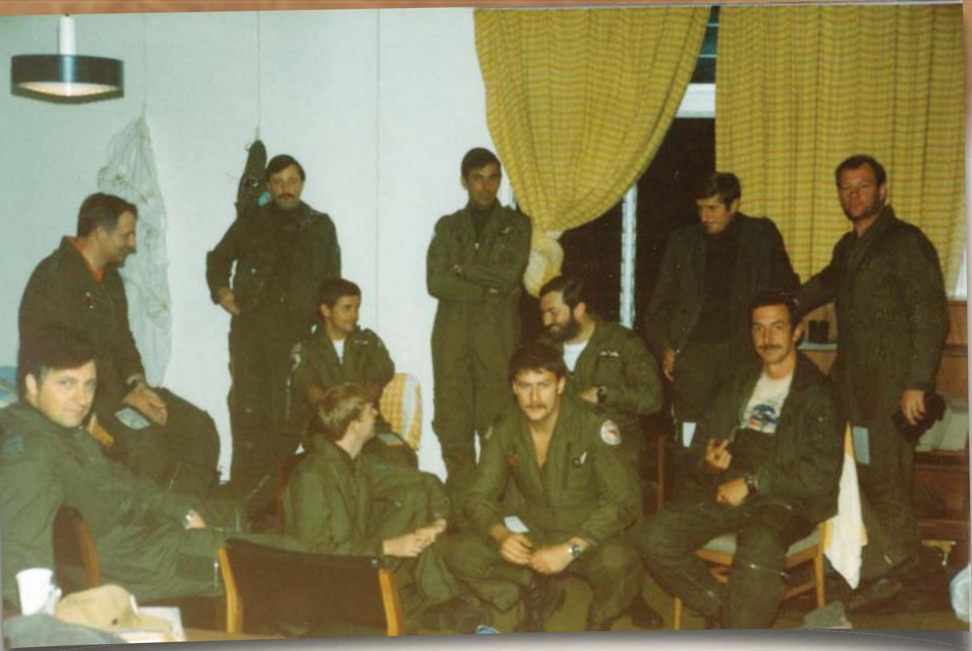
This time there were no equipment failures. The flight to the Falklands was successful and the aircraft descended to 300 feet above the sea some 150 miles from the islands. By making the same approach as the previous *Black Buck* missions, the idea was to make the Argentines think it was another bombing mission.

Intelligence reports had identified three possible sites where the radar might be located. Once the initial approach to the island had been made, the Vulcan continued on a racetrack pattern over Port Stanley to determine where the radar actually was. They had forty-five minutes to do this before the fuel situation required them to return home.

ABOVE LEFT and RIGHT: **Examples of the two missiles considered for use on the Vulcan during the Falklands War, seen whilst having been fitted to XM597. On the left is a Martel missile, whilst an AGM-45 Shrike can be seen on the right. The much bigger size of the former is apparent in this comparison.** (Courtesy of Wing Commander (Retd.) David Castle)

LEFT: **A map showing the locations where it was believed the Argentine Westinghouse AN/TPS 43 Search Radar, the target of Operation *Black Buck 5*, might be located in the vicinity of Stanley. Note how one site was immediately adjacent to the built-up area.**

BELOW: **Vulcans on the flight line at Wideawake Airfield. Initially, space was so limited at Ascension (due to the volume of aircraft deployments and movements) that there was only room for two Vulcans. This capacity was subsequently increased to four, allowing XM597 to deploy.** (Courtesy of Wing Commander (Retd.) David Castle)



Playing a game of cat and mouse with the Argentine defenders, the aircraft flew over Port Stanley trying to get a radar to lock on. To successfully attack and achieve the maximum pK ratio required a very precise set of release parameters. Both missiles would be launched together with the aircraft in a 20° dive, at a range of exactly 6.9 miles.

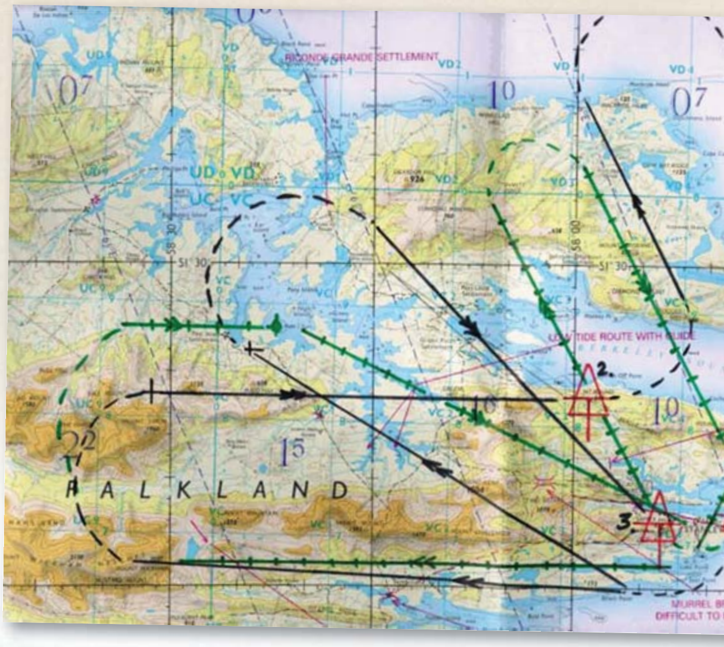
Suddenly, as they were flying over Port Stanley, the TPS-43's emissions were picked up from one of the three suspected positions. The crew of XM597 commenced the attack profile and launched two missiles.

The Argentines fought back and the Vulcan's crew clearly recall the 35mm Oerlikon guns opening fire and shells exploding with brilliant flashes just below the aircraft.

With the missiles now launched, the only way to judge the success of the strike was on the time of flight of the missile to impact. From the height at which XM597 launched the two Shrike missiles, the time to impact should have been approximately thirty seconds. Recording the time of flight using a stopwatch, the crew observed the radar switch off almost to the second.

The Vulcan's crew had no way to confirm the success of the attack; unbeknown to them the missile had impacted about six yards away from the radar, damaging it and putting it out of action. The damage, however, was not terminal and the Argentines managed to repair it and bring it back into service a few days later.

XM597 now turned for home, eventually landing at Wideawake after a sixteen-hour mission. McDougall and his crew had flown into aviation history by completing what was, at that time, the longest combat mission ever undertaken.



ABOVE: **Vulcan crew members pictured at Ascension Island prior to *Black Buck 5*. Standing, left to right, are Neil McDougall, Barry Smith, two unidentified spare aircrew, and Brian Gardner. In the front row, again left to right, are Rod Trevaskus, Chris Lackman, and Dave Castle. The men sat in the middle are again unidentified spare aircrew.** (Courtesy of Wing Commander (Retd.) David Castle)

RIGHT: **A map that was used on the *Black Buck* missions showing the race-track pattern flown by XM597 over the Stanley area during Operation *Black Buck 5*.** (Courtesy of Wing Commander (Retd.) David Castle)

BELOW: **Evidence of the *Black Buck* raids, such as this bomb crater near the airfield, can be seen today.** (Courtesy of Jon Cooksey)

THE BLACK BUCK MISSIONS

MISSION	DATE	LEAD VULCAN	RESERVE VULCAN	DESCRIPTION
1	30 April – 1 May	XM598	XM607	The target was the main runway at Port Stanley, which was to be attacked with twenty-one 1,000lb GP bombs. Shortly after take-off, XM598 suffered a pressurisation failure and was forced to return to Ascension; XM607 took over. The stick of bombs straddled the airfield, damaged the control building, scored a single direct hit in the centre of the runway and killed two Argentine personnel. The news of the successful raid was reported on the BBC World Service before the Vulcan or the last Victor tanker had arrived at Ascension.
2	3/4 May	XM607	XM598	This raid targeted the area at the western end of the runway using the same operational plan as *Black Buck 1*. Two Argentine soldiers were wounded according to enemy sources, which also confirmed bomb impacts near the western end of the airstrip.
3	13 May	XM612	XM607	Cancelled prior to take-off due to strong headwinds.
4	28 May	XM597	XM598	Aborted some five hours into the mission when one of the supporting Victor tankers suffered a failure of its refuelling unit causing the flight to be recalled.
5	31 May	XM597	XM598	Using the AGM-45 Shrike missiles, this was the first successful anti-radar mission. The target was a Westinghouse AN/TPS 43 Search Radar located near Stanley. The first missile impacted ten yards from the target, causing minor blast damage to the wave-guide assembly, but not disabling the radar.
6	3 June	XM597	XM598	On this raid, the Vulcan attacked and destroyed an Argentine Skyguard fire-control radar.
7	12 June	XM607	XM598	The mission targeted enemy troop positions close to Stanley. The attack successfully cratered the eastern end of the airfield and caused widespread damage to airfield stores and facilities.

The results of *Black Buck 5* had an immediate effect on the Argentine radar defences on the Falklands. They had been caught completely unaware by the strike. The first thing they knew was when the missiles had impacted near the AN/TPS-43. Now the radar operators would not know if enemy aircraft flying overhead were on a bombing mission or an anti-radar mission. From this moment on when an un-identified aircraft was located overhead the operators of all radars simply switched their sets off rather than risk being attacked. They could no longer operate with impunity. The raid had resulted in significantly reducing the effectiveness of the Argentine defences.

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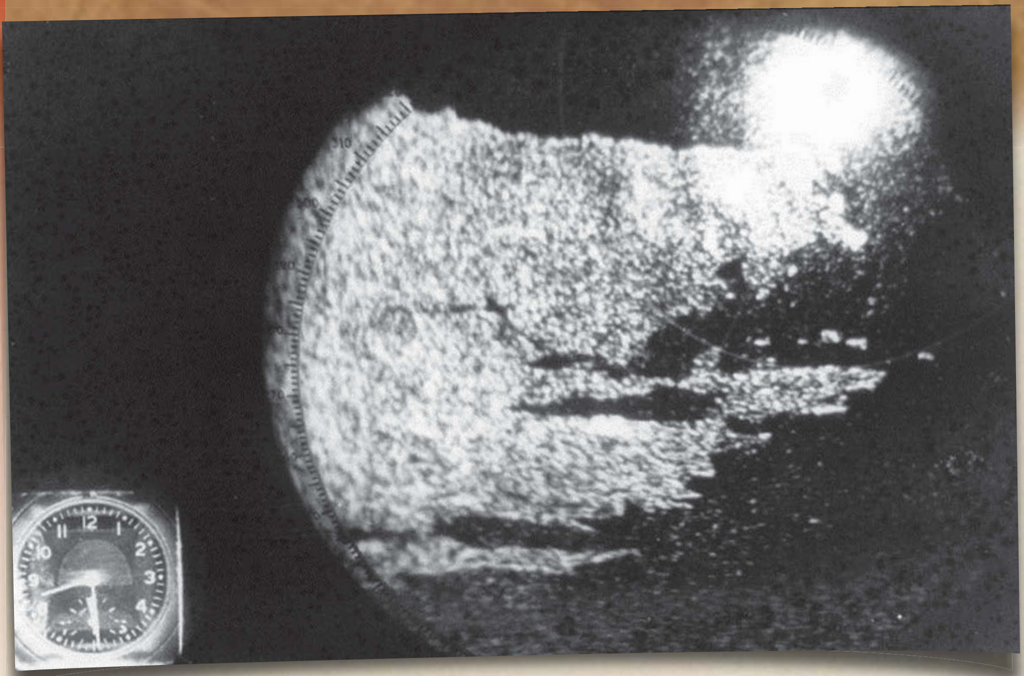
The crew of XM597 took-off again on 2 June 1982 for another mission. Operation *Black Buck 6* was planned to be executed in the same way as the previous raid. Lessons learned during *Black Buck 5* showed that, whilst flying over Port Stanley, the Vulcan had been momentarily locked onto by Skyguard anti-aircraft fire control radars.

As a result of this, the number of missiles carried had been increased to four. Two would be programmed to search for the wavelength that the AN/TPS-43 operated on, the second pair to seek on the frequency used by the fire



control radars. The mission was to be co-ordinated with an attack on the airfield at Port Stanley by RAF Harrier GR.3s flying from HMS *Hermes*. The Vulcan would suppress the airfield defences whilst the Harriers attacked, though the key aim was still to destroy the AN/TPS-43.

Arriving over Port Stanley the big bomber repeated the cat and mouse game with the defences. This time, apart from the occasional momentary lock, the enemy radars were silent.

After thirty-five to forty minutes, at which point the Vulcan was nearing its endurance limit over Port Stanley, Squadron Leader McDougall made a decision. He put the aircraft into a steep dive and the aircraft started to descend. By doing this he succeeded in enticing a Skyguard radar to lock on to the Vulcan and 35mm guns started to engage it.

Descending in a dive the Vulcan was flying into the effective range of the guns and shells started exploding at almost the same height. However, McDougall's crew was able to manoeuvre into a position to lock on to the Skyguard radar and ripple fire two missiles. These struck the radar site and completely destroyed it. Four of the crew were killed and a fifth injured.

With its fuel reserves now used up, the Vulcan turned to commence the long flight back to Ascension. Eleven hours into the mission, XM597 glided into position for its final refuelling. Things, however, went badly wrong.

The crew realised that they were now stuck over the middle of the South Atlantic with insufficient fuel to reach Wideawake.

The Vulcan's fuel probe broke off completely, destroying any chance of re-fuelling the aircraft. The crew realised that they were now stuck over the middle of the South Atlantic with insufficient fuel to reach Wideawake.

The eventuality that this situation could arise had been considered and the crew had been briefed to send a Mayday distress call prior to abandoning the aircraft. They would then take to their survival dinghies and wait to be picked up by the nearest ship which would be directed to their location.

The six men onboard took stock of the situation. They were about 700 miles to the nearest landfall – mainland Brazil. The co-pilot, Flying Officer Chris Lackman, did a set of calculations which indicated they did not have sufficient fuel to even reach there. There was a chance, however, that by climbing to a high altitude above 43,000 feet it might just be possible to cruise and eke out the fuel by flying at the maximum range power settings.

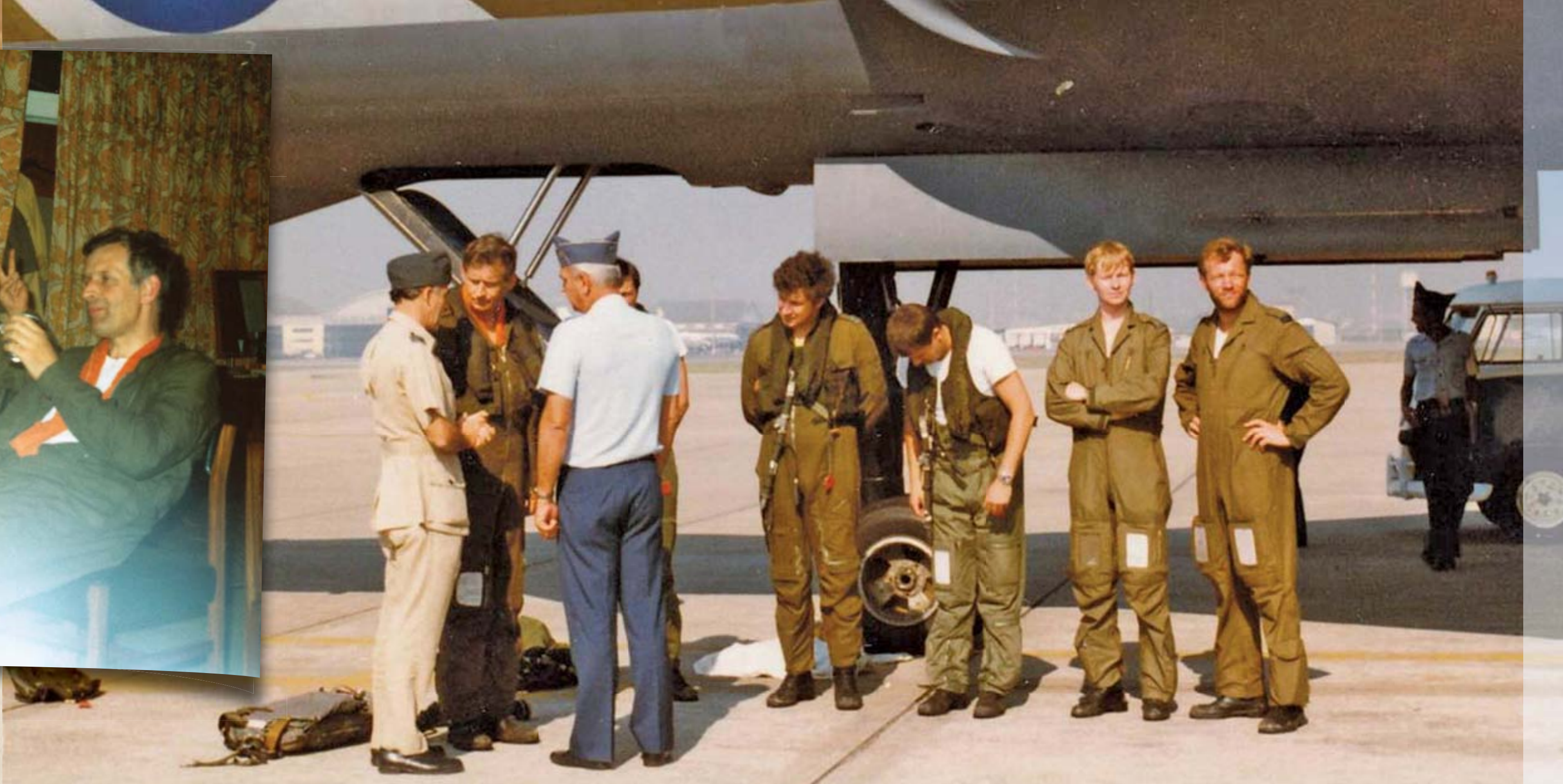
As the crew now focussed on trying to make landfall they started to realise that if they did successfully manage to land, it would be in a foreign country – and they were carrying a large amount of classified documentation.

All the documents, maps, camera film, crypto and briefing materials were put in

ABOVE LEFT: **An image recorded on XM597's H2S radar by navigator Flight Lieutenant Dave Castle. The outline of the coast can be clearly seen and, to a trained eye, the town of Stanley can be identified, along with the runway of Port Stanley Airfield.** (Courtesy of Wing Commander (Retd.) David Castle)

ABOVE RIGHT: **Navigator Dave Castle and Captain Neil McDougall enjoy a beer after Operation *Black Buck 5*.** (Courtesy of Wing Commander (Retd.) David Castle)

LEFT: **This view of Vulcan to the Sky Trust's XH558 illustrates the escape hatch beneath a Vulcan's fuselage that the crew of XM597 struggled with during *Black Buck 6*.** (Author)



an aluminium box and weighted down with the undercarriage locks. They now had to depressurise the aircraft cabin and open the escape hatch located underneath the aircraft. The escape hatch (also used to access the aircraft in normal circumstances) automatically opens outwards, using hydraulic jacks. So, the hatch was opened and the secret material was disposed of.

The hatch now had to be closed – an operation normally achieved from the ground. The lever that opens the hatch locks automatically when fully open and is located on the furthest side away from the cockpit. The crew now had a situation where they needed to close the hatch, but from the inside they could not reach the handle to disengage it from its locked position.

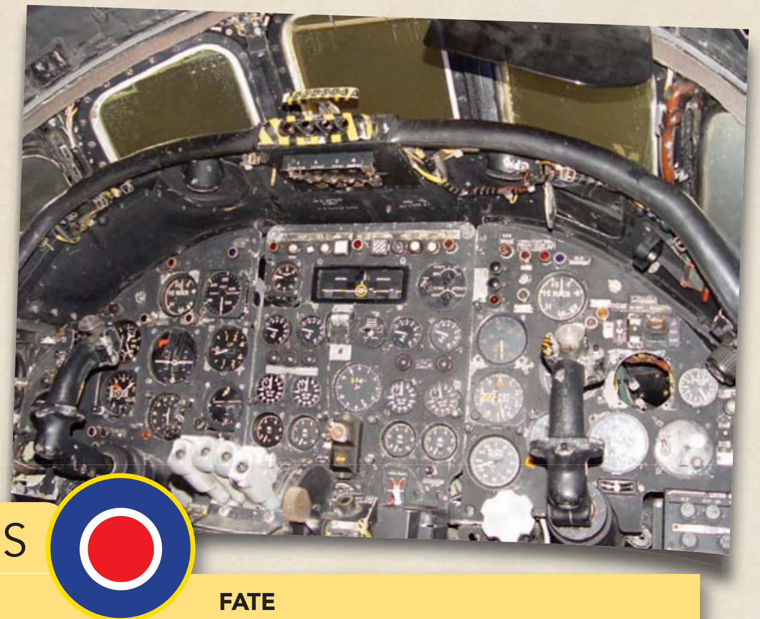
This required desperate measures. The only way they could close the door was by getting down over the hatch and unlocking the handle. Hanging out of the aircraft in the 300-knot airstream at 45,000 feet over the South Atlantic, Brian Gardner, held on to by navigator Dave Castle, finally managed to close the door after a period of twenty-five minutes.

Whilst the frenetic activity to close the escape door had been going on, the captain and co-pilot had been transmitting Mayday calls indicating that they were a British four-engine jet desperately short of fuel requiring immediate diversion to the nearest suitable airfield.

Eventually a Brazilian air traffic controller responded by indicating that they were not to enter Brazilian airspace until they divulged who they were,

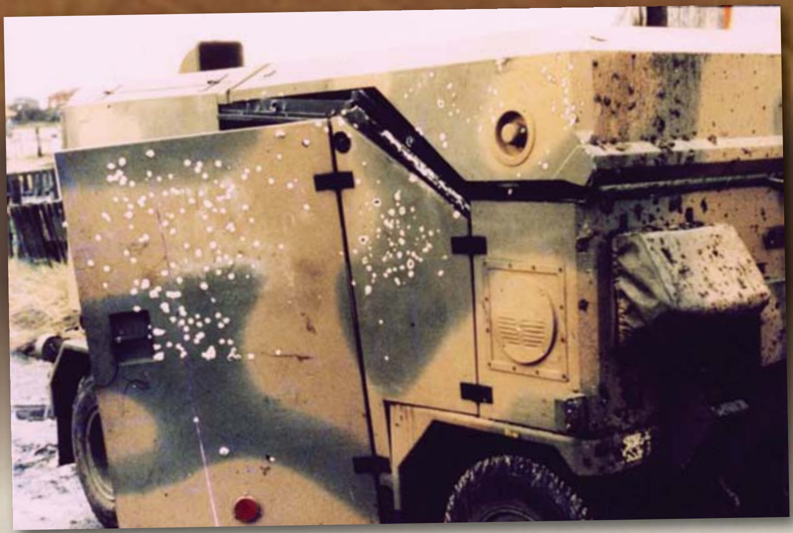
ABOVE: **The crew of XM597 pictured prior to leaving Rio De Janeiro on 10 June 1982. From left to right are: Wing Commander Jerry Brown (the British Air Attaché), Squadron Leader Neil McDougall, the Brazilian base commander (referring to Rio's Galeão Air Force Base), Flight Lieutenant Barry Smith (behind the base commander), Flight Lieutenant Rod Trevaskus, Flight Lieutenant Dave Castle, Flying Officer Chris Lackman and Flight Lieutenant Brian Gardner.** (Courtesy of Wing Commander (Retd.) David Castle)

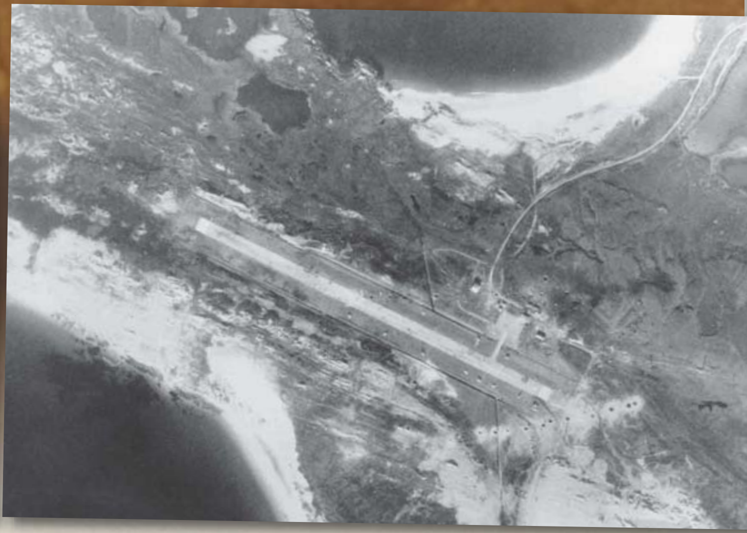
RIGHT: **A view of part of the cramped cockpit of an Avro Vulcan – the "office" occupied by Squadron Leader Neil McDougall (pilot) and Flying Officer Chris Lackman (Co-pilot) during Operation *Black Buck 5*. The actual aircraft seen here is XH558, the last airworthy Vulcan which was been restored to flying condition by the Vulcan to the Sky Trust.** (Author)



THE BLACK BUCK VULCANS

VULCAN	MISSIONS	FATE
XM597	*Black Buck 4, 5, 6*	Having entered service with 12 Squadron on 27 August 1963, going on to serve with Nos. 35, 50, 9, 101 and 35 squadrons, this Vulcan B.2 retired to the National Museum of Flight at East Fortune, Scotland, in 1984.
XM598	*Black Buck 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7*	One of the first two Vulcans deployed to the South Atlantic, XM598 was withdrawn from service by 17 December 1982, and was duly stored at RAF Waddington pending disposal. On 20 January 1983, the aircraft was flown to Cosford. The brake parachute deployed immediately and the aircraft stopped in less than two thirds of the runway's length. XM598 can be seen in the National Cold War Exhibition building at the RAF Museum Cosford.
XM607	*Black Buck 1, 2, 3, 7*	Delivered to the RAF on 31 December 1963, this B.2 is preserved at RAF Waddington and is displayed on a purpose-built hard-standing.
XM612	*Black Buck 3*	Completed in February 1964, XM612 entered service with 9 Squadron the following month. She flew in to Norwich Airport on 30 January 1983, and today can found on show in the City of Norwich Aviation Museum.





ABOVE LEFT: Part of the Argentine Skyguard radar, operated by *Grupo de Artillería Antiaérea 601*, or GAA 601,that was destroyed during Operation *Black Buck 6*. This attack was also carried out by Squadron Leader Neil McDougall and his crew in XM597.

ABOVE RIGHT: A vertical photo-reconnaissance image showing bomb craters on the runway at Port Stanley Airfield after the passing of RAF aircraft – most notably the Vulcans of *Black Buck 1* and *2*.

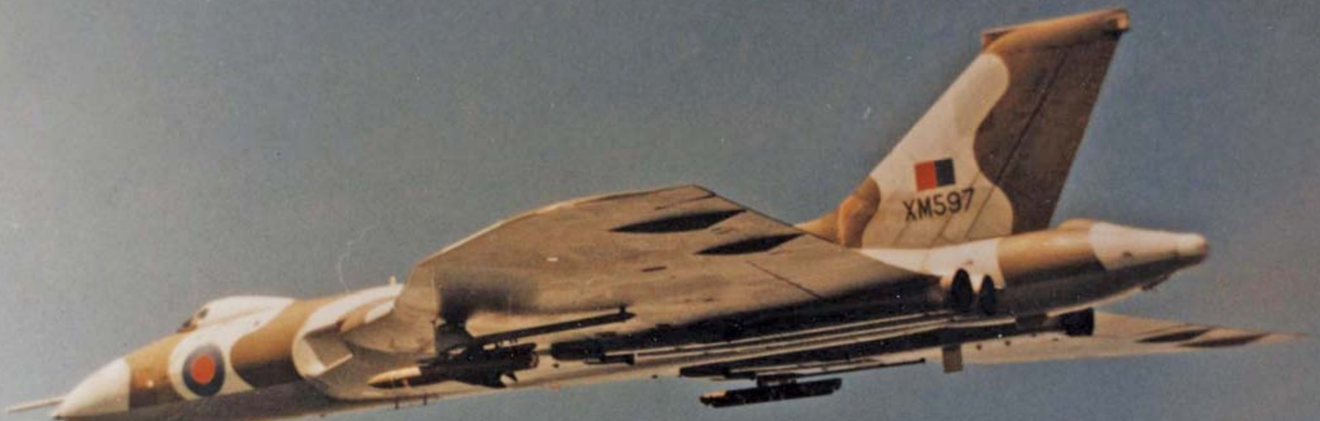
BELOW: A British air attack on Stanley airfield pictured in progress. In this poor quality image smoke can be seen rising in the distance. (IWM FKD1199)

what they were doing and where they had come from. At this stage, the crew had no wish to reveal their true identity and mission so continued to repeat the initial distress call. The Brazilian air traffic controller continued pestering the Vulcan's crew with questions, whilst the pilots struggled to communicate with the navigators as their oxygen regulators force-fed oxygen under pressure. An exasperated Dave Castle, a native of Yorkshire, shouted: "Tell them, for God's sake, to shut-up for a minute and if they won't, tell them we're from Huddersfield". The pilots tried this; the Brazilian Air Traffic controller was totally nonplussed.

Now un-burdened with the drama of ditching the classified material and, for the time being, the over-excited air traffic controller subdued, a new problem now needed resolving – aside from the fact that two Brazilian Air Force Northrop F-5s were searching for the Vulcan. XM597 still had two un-fired live missiles attached to it. They needed to be got rid of quickly.

As the missiles had been fitted in such a hurry there was no safe jettison facility available; they would have to be live-fired from the aircraft. By now they were within 200 miles of the Brazilian coast. To ensure there were no surface ships in the vicinity, the aircraft's radar was switched on. Approximately forty miles ahead of the aircraft a number of luminous blips appeared on the radar display. What looked like a fishing fleet, with each boat sporting a small navigation radar, was dead ahead of the bomber, blissfully unaware of the Vulcan and its deadly radar-homing missiles about to be launched.

The crew of XM597 could not run the risk of a missile locking on to one of these boats and blowing it to smithereens.



There was only one course of action; to turn away from the vessels and find a clear space to launch the Shrikes. This meant turning south away from land and using up precious fuel.

Eventually finding some clear sea, Flight Lieutenant Rod Trevaskus pressed the fire button. One of the missiles went off the rail; the other did not. He pressed again – no reaction. Clearly, one missile had hung up. Having no other option, McDougall quickly turned back onto a westerly course again.

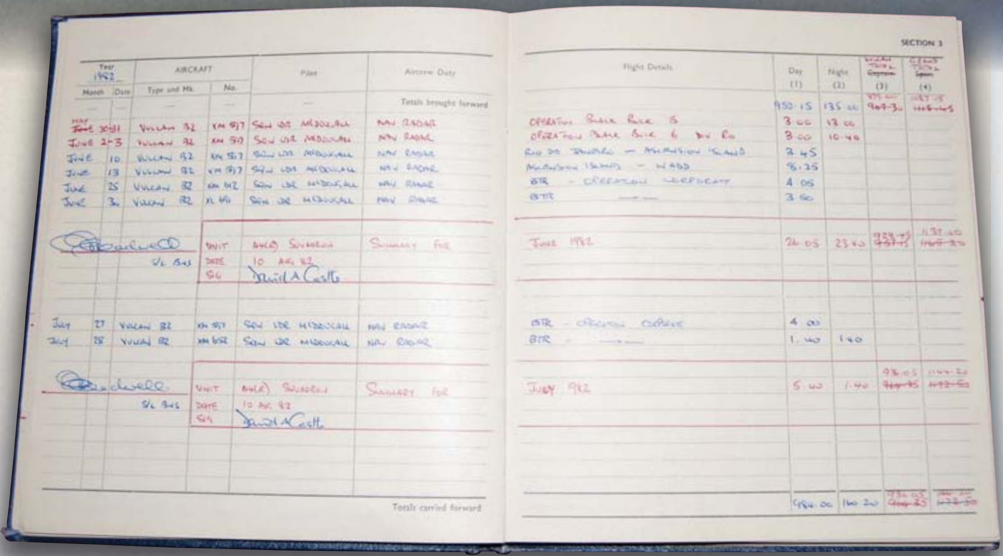
The next challenge was where to land? The only map that was un-marked and suitable to keep had been a large-scale topographical map – it did not have sufficient detail of the Brazilian coast. There was clearly insufficient fuel to attempt an approach to any airfield beyond the coastal strip. There was only one airfield that navigators Dave Castle and Barry Smith knew would probably be long enough, and that was Rio De Janeiro's international airport. So that was where they headed.

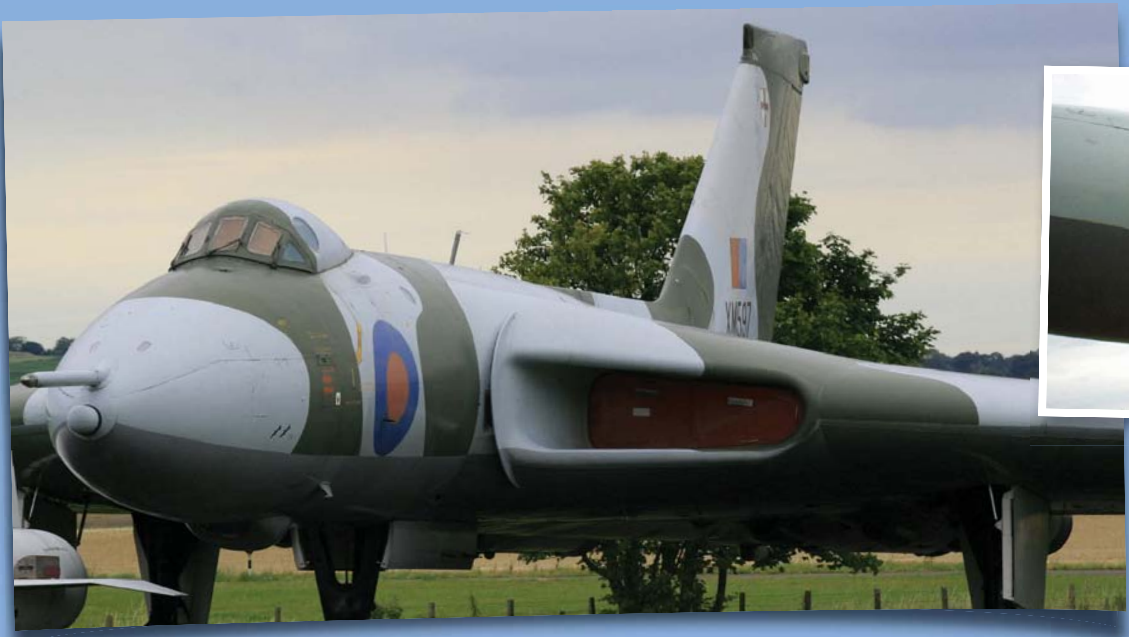
The Vulcan staged down from 45,000 feet to 20,000 feet, at which point the pilots were able to locate the airport visually following a steer from Castle's

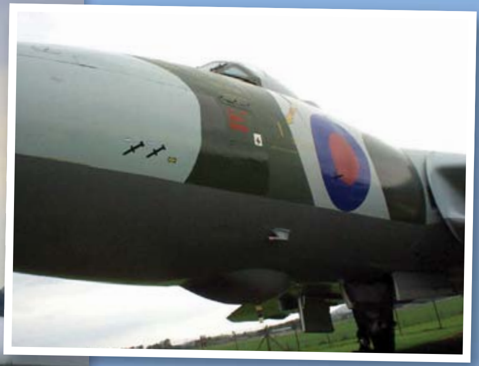
ABOVE: **Vulcan XM597 pictured airborne whilst fitted with a Martel anti-radiation missile.** (Glenn Sands Collection)

RIGHT: **Flight Lieutenant Dave Castle's navigator logbook detailing his involvement in the *Black Buck* missions.** (Courtesy of Wing Commander (Retd.) David Castle)

LEFT: **Both of the Avro Vulcans involved in Operation *Black Buck 1* have survived and can be seen today. This is Avro Vulcan B.2 XM598 which is on display in the Cold War Exhibition at the RAF Museum, Cosford. At the start of the conflict, XM598 was on the strength of 50 Squadron at RAF Waddington, Lincolnshire. She was retired from operational RAF service in December 1982.** (With the kind permission of Jebediah Springfield)







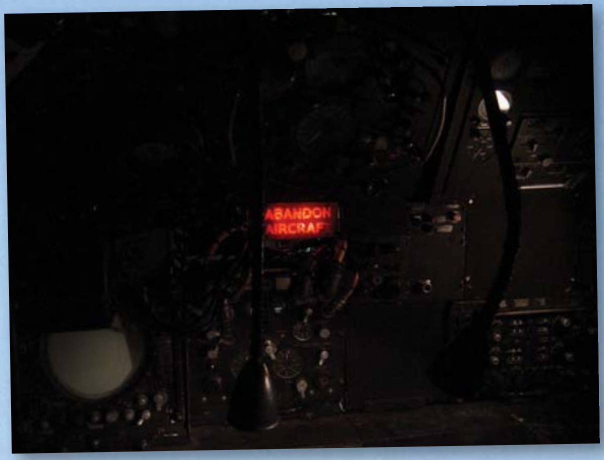
ABOVE: **Like the other Vulcans involved in the *Black Buck* missions, XM597 has survived and can be seen today at the National Museum of Flight at East Fortune. The mission markings from its two attacks on the Falklands, along with a Brazilian flag commemorating her unscheduled stopover, are visible below the cockpit (inset).** (Christopher Wright, CMGW Photography)

radar. At this stage the fuel situation looked better than predicted, though was still precarious. McDougall closed the throttles and entered a spiral glide descent from 16,000 feet. The descent was perfect and, in an act of supreme airmanship, he landed the aircraft in a glide without needing to use the throttles at any stage in the descent.

When the Vulcan came to a halt the fuel gauges on all four engines were indicating empty. The margin had been so close that if the approach had gone wrong then it was unlikely that they would have had sufficient fuel for another attempt. McDougall had also successfully landed his aircraft with the unfired Shrike still hanging on the wing pylon; luckily the vibration on landing had not set it off.

As they had landed without official sanction, the crew was unsure of the reception it would receive. They were greeted by armed guards and were immediately put under open arrest and taken to the Brazilian Air Force Officers' Mess. Politics now came into play. The Argentine authorities had requested that they were handed over to them, but Brazil was a neutral country and refused this request. They were, however, unsure of what to do with the British bomber and its crew, the aircraft a very obvious spectacle parked at Rio's international airport. Whilst the negotiations went on at a political level, the crew of XM597, restricted to the Officers' Mess, took it in turns to mount guard over the aircraft for twelve-hour shifts.

The crew also had the problem of the un-launched Shrike missile. Using rudimentary tools they removed the missile which was spirited away by the Brazilians, never to be seen again.



RIGHT: **Had XM597's "glide" to Rio gone wrong, this "Abandon Aircraft" alarm panel could have been used to provide a warning to those members of the crew outside of the cockpit that they would have to abandon the aircraft. It was located in front of the NavPlotter and, in the case of an emergency, would have been illuminated by the Vulcan's captain, normally after he had already informed his crew over the intercom. It was never illuminated during XM597's mission.** (Author)

BELOW: **Vulcan XM607, a veteran of four of the *Black Buck* missions, currently resides at RAF Waddington. In recent years, and in common with many other surviving Vulcans, she has been used as a source of spares and parts for the restoration of the only flying Vulcan, XH558.** (With the kind permission of Jebediah Springfield)

The Brazilians, though, had a problem. Pope John Paul II was scheduled to visit Rio De Janeiro on 10 June, stopping over before travelling on to Argentina. The last thing the authorities wanted as a backdrop to the Pope's arrival was the imposing and very obvious bulk of an RAF Vulcan bomber.

With the Brazilians unable to move the aircraft, the Pope's visit would ultimately prove to be the unlikely catalyst for the release of the aircraft and its crew. The Brazilians agreed to release the aircraft, on the proviso that it would not be used on offensive operations again and that it was removed before the Pope arrived. XM597 eventually departed just before the Pope's visit and flew back to Ascension Island.

The plan had been for the crew to remain on Ascension and continue flying albeit in a different airframe. This would not happen, however, because, at 21.00 hours on 14 June 1982, the commander of the Argentine garrison in Stanley surrendered. The war had ended.

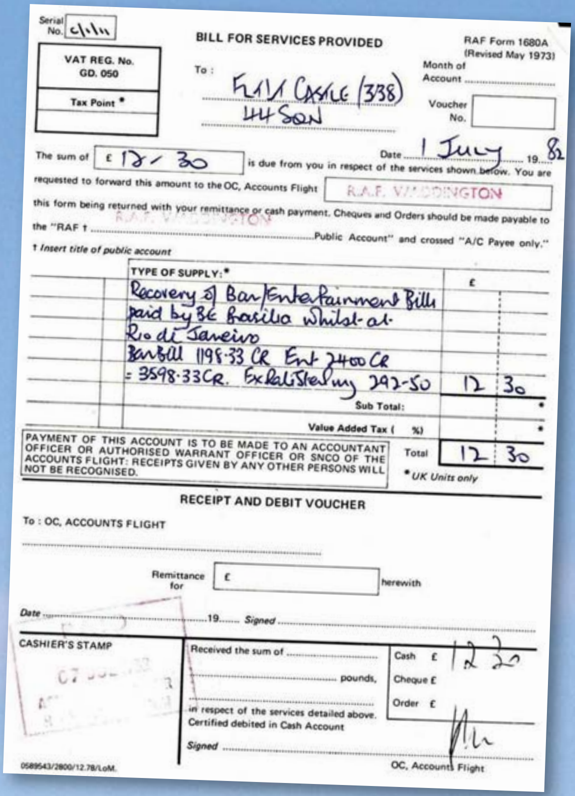
The crew of XM597 returned to RAF Waddington. However, for one of the crew, navigator Dave Castle, the story had not quite finished.

Much to his surprise, a bill arrived from the British Embassy in Brasilia for the princely sum of £12.30. Despite flying an epic mission, being interned and then navigating the aircraft safely home, in true British bureaucratic style, his bar bill from the Brazilian Officers' Mess had followed him home all the way to RAF Waddington – a tangible if somewhat unwanted reminder of a remarkable mission. ■

ABOVE: **The crew of XM597 pictured beneath the aircraft after their safe arrival back at RAF Waddington in Lincolnshire following the Argentine surrender.** (Courtesy of Wing Commander (Retd.) David Castle)

RIGHT: **Flight Lieutenant Dave Castle's unusual memento of Operation *Black Buck 6* – the bill he was presented with after his return to RAF Waddington. A system obviously existed for a daily allowance for an interned airman – a rate of 2,400 Brazilian Cruceros. A balance equivalent to £12.30 was still owing on his return to the UK!** (Courtesy of Wing Commander (Retd.) David Castle)

Acknowledgement: The author would like to extend his grateful thanks to Wing Commander (Retd.) David Castle, for his assistance with this article and for permitting use of his images, and also Martin Withers.



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YOMPING TO VICTORY

The Commandos were to land in the sheltered waters of San Carlos. This would give protection from enemy submarines and air-launched Exocet missiles. But San Carlos was on the opposite side of East Falkland Island from the capital Stanley and the Commandos would have to "yomp" the whole way.

MAIN PICTURE: Heavily laden Royal Marines of 45 Commando, carrying 140lb packs, enter Stanley after a remarkable march across the East Falkland. Their route from the west coast to the east took them through marshes and mountains, included night time marching, and was, at that time, the longest march in full kit in the history of the Commando force. (All images courtesy of Pen & Sword unless stated otherwise)

To the men of 45 Commando the war so far had been great fun, until they were ordered to march from San Carlos to Newhouse. They had been ashore for five days and had been able to watch events unfolding around them as they acclimatized to conditions in the South Atlantic. Now they had to start walking, "yomping" – i.e. marching with full packs – over the rough and wind-blown terrain of East Falkland to spearhead the main assault upon the Falkland Islands capital.

Each man had to carry a load of between 120 to 150lbs on their backs, which represented around two-thirds to three-quarters of their own body weight. Some men found it impossible to lift their rucksacks on to their backs without help. So they devised a means whereby they "climbed" into their load while lying on the ground, rolled over and then got their mates to heave them into a position from which they could get to their feet!

The first march conducted by the men of 45 Commando, to Newhouse, a journey of almost fourteen miles, marked the start of an intensely difficult period for the Commandos. It was not so much the weather that was the problem, though that was bad enough, as the soft, boggy terrain.

"The weight we carried meant that at every step we went in up to our shins and sometimes our knees, or even further," recalled Captain Ian Gardiner who commanded 45 Commando's X Ray Company. "The boggy bits were interspersed with robust, tufty, grass-covered hummocks which, however one stood on them, conspired to turn one's ankle. The ground was pretty steep in places, but worst of all was this cursed weight."

"The weight we carried meant that at every step we went in up to our shins and sometimes our knees, or even further."

What made Gardiner and his men angry was the suspicion that there was simply no need to carry quite so much equipment. Yet march on they did. They had just five small, tracked over-snow vehicles to carry the non-packable secure voice radios, the mortars and their ammunition and the other essential headquarters equipment. This meant that every man, including Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Whitehead and his headquarters staff, had to yomp.

To add to the difficulty of the bumps and bogs were the many streams which the men had to cross. Normally they would simply leap across these small watercourses, but no-one can jump very far with 150lbs on their back. The men tried taking off their rucksacks and throwing them over, this requiring two men to heave each rucksack. Worse, this also meant going through the rigmarole of getting the packs on to their backs once again. In the end the men simply waded through the (very cold) streams.

If all this was not bad enough, there were the wire fences to climb over. The men would rush to be the first to get to a post where they could rest their rucksack at the bottom to help them climb over. Those who couldn't get a post would resort to standing on top of the wire, which of course sagged. Eventually the wire could take no more and broke, leaving a long line of men lying on their

MAIN PICTURE: **The "yomp" begins – men of 45 Commando preparing to move out from Port San Carlos and start the long march towards Stanley. Following the Argentine invasion of 2 April 1982, 45 Commando, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Andrew F. Whitehead RM, had its Easter leave cancelled and, instead, was hastily deployed to the Falklands, travelling in a mix of Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships.**

RIGHT: **With the "yomp" yet to begin, Royal Marines raise the Union Flag at San Carlos beachhead during Operation *Sutton* on 21 May 1982.** (Glenn Sands Collection)

backs like upturned turtles!

Robert Fox was a BBC radio reporter embedded with the Commandos. "As the cloud lifted that afternoon and the sun came out, we crashed through streams and up bluffs of peat and rock ... the column rested for ten minutes every hour, the standard practice for the British Army on the march for centuries. The principal discomfort was damp socks rubbing against boots causing blisters, and at times the marines were almost carelessly generous in handing round sticking plaster to bind the feet."[1]

Over the course of that first day, 45 Commando lost fifteen men – all with twisted ankles or associated injuries, such as torn Achilles tendons. Those that had to drop out sat disconsolately at the side of the line of march, devastated at the prospect of missing out on the action that was to come. 3 Commando Brigade included the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the Parachute Regiment to bolster its numbers and they experienced no less difficulty than the Marines. They, though, did not yomp, they "tabbed".

"We were probably heavier than we should have been, each with a hundred rounds of GPMG and five 7.62mm magazines, plus grenades," Captain Adrian Robert Freer, of 3 Para, recalled. "Even only with belt order, the weight was substantial. Our DMS boots and puttees were useless for walking across boggy, broken country in two or three inches of water, which, with the cold and blisters, destroyed

ABOVE: Key members of 45 Commando Group about to receive CO's orders for the "yomp" on 26 May 1982. The CO, Lieutenant Colonel Andrew F. Whitehead RM, who was awarded a DSO for his actions during the Falklands War, can be seen on the far left. Captain Ian Gardiner is seventh from left.

BELOW: The "yomp" underway.

THE ROYAL MARINES IN THE FALKLANDS WAR

1. 3 Commando Brigade Headquarters and Signal Squadron Royal Marines
2. 40 Commando Royal Marines
3. 42 Commando Royal Marines
4. 45 Commando Royal Marines
5. 3 Commando Brigade Air Squadron Royal Marines
6. The Commando Logistics Regiment Royal Marines
7. The Special Boat Squadron
8. Royal Marines Detachments (including landing craft crews)
9. Air Defence Troop Royal Marines
10. 1st Raiding Squadron Royal Marines
11. Mountain and Arctic Warfare Cadre Royal Marines
12. Y Troop Royal Marines
13. The Bands of Her Majesty's Royal Marines Commando Forces and Flag Officer 3rd Flotilla
14. Field Records Office Royal Marines

people's feet. There's nothing you could do about this, you just had to crack on."[2]

That first march continued through the night until 02.00 hours and, as might be expected, "yomping" in the dark was even more problematic, as Gardiner remembered:

"Night-time marching is a different order of unpleasantness. An inescapable feature of walking at night in a long line is a great deal of stopping and starting. The man in front pauses to find a way across a stream or similar obstacle. The man behind him stops and waits. The man behind him bumps into him, waits, and so on. A way is found across the obstacle, men start to move, they run to catch up, then get separated in the dark. How often did this concertina sequence repeat itself! The effect gets magnified the further down the line, and for near the tail-end of a queue of 600 men bumping, stumbling, standing and running through the black, boggy night, life was hell."

The Commandos arrived at the isolated farmstead of Newhouse of Glamis. The order came to bed down and be ready to march off again at first light. They had no tents but they did have their bivouac shelters, or "bivvies". A bivvie was simply a waterproof poncho supported by a stick with a rubber bungee at each end, pegged into the ground at the sides and at each quarter. Usually two were clipped together to form a two-man bivvie. Rifles at their sides, the men had to be ready to move at a moment's notice so they could not undress and if they were able to take their boots off they had to put them inside their sleeping bags to prevent them from freezing. Yet they were content. "With a dry sleeping bag, a plastic roll mat, a hot drink, a trusty companion, and a cigarette: truly one lacked for nothing."

*

As it happened it had been a dry night

so far and Gardiner had told his men not to bother setting up their bivvies. Predictably, it rained during the night and their sleeping bags, described by Gardiner as "a man's last bastion of morale" were soaked. The men's morale was at its lowest and the campaign had only just begun.

They set off eastwards once more. Now they were beyond the air defence umbrella of the ships and missiles in San Carlos Water so they advanced in tactical formation. This meant that instead of a long snake, they spread out into an arrow formation by companies, poised to go straight into action on contact with the enemy. X Ray Company led the way. This time, though, the men were able to leave their huge packs behind, carrying only what they needed to fight. Their march was less than eight miles to Douglas Settlement and it had been arranged that when they arrived their packs were brought to them by helicopter. The rucksacks did not arrive and it meant another night in a wet sleeping bag.

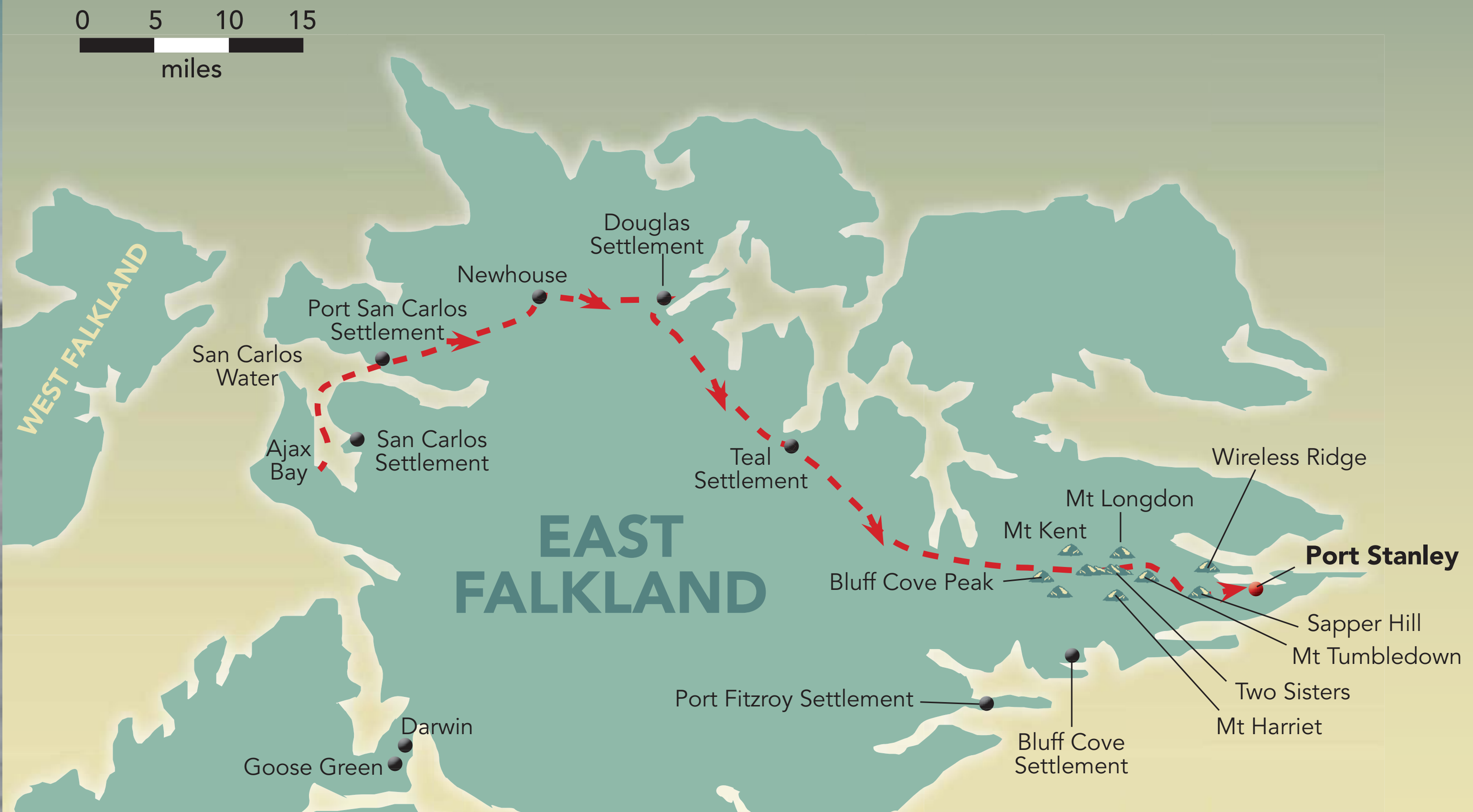
For Major Richard Davis' Yankee Company this was a particularly bad night. The men had been deployed to clear an enemy observation position beyond the settlement. They waded across Douglas Creek up to their waists only to find the Argentine position abandoned. They then had to spend the night very cold and uncomfortable and without food, in the enemy trench.

The Commandos left Douglas at first

ABOVE LEFT: Two Royal Marines of 3 Commando Brigade "blacked up" and ready to board a landing craft at the start of Operation *Sutton*, the landings at San Carlos Bay. (Glenn Sands Collection)

ABOVE RIGHT: Brigade Headquarters striking camp during the "yomp". The ground and weather was typical of that encountered by 45 Commando.

BELOW: A map showing the route of 45 Commando's "yomp". Having made a tactical landing at Red Beach, Ajax Bay on 21 May 1982, the men of 45 Commando marched across East Falkland, via Newhouse, Douglas Settlement, Teal Inlet and Mount Kent, to take part in the Battle for Stanley, conducting a night attack on the Two Sisters feature over the 11/12 June 1982, during which the Commando lost eight men killed and seventeen wounded.


0
5
10
15
miles
WEST FALKLAND
Douglas Settlement
Newhouse
Port San Carlos Settlement
San Carlos Water
Ajax Bay
San Carlos Settlement
Teal Settlement
EAST FALKLAND
Wireless Ridge
Mt Longdon
Mt Kent
Port Stanley
Bluff Cove Peak
Sapper Hill
Mt Tumbledown
Two Sisters
Mt Harriet
Port Fitzroy Settlement
Bluff Cove Settlement
Darwin
Goose Green

ABOVE: A typical stone run as encountered by the men of 45 Commando during their crossing of East Falkland. These rivers of stone were major obstacles to the heavily-loaded Marines, especially at night.

LEFT: The men of 45 Commando setting off from Teal Inlet. The Marine in the foreground is Regimental Sergeant Major Pat Chapman.

light on 30 May, after a day's rest and their packs having finally arrived. This time they had a long march to Teal Inlet, some thirteen miles. Because their feet were wet virtually all the time, many men began to suffer the first stages of trench foot. On the march to Teal, which took some fifteen hours, it also began to snow. X Ray Company spent that night in a stinking, filthy, tick-ridden sheep pen but compared to the previous night Gardiner described it as "absolute bliss".

By this time other elements of 3 Commando Brigade begun to close in upon the Argentine positions skirting Stanley, and 45 Commando expected to be air-lifted to a patrol base at Bluff Cove Peak, nearly nineteen miles to the south-east. This would be their base from which they would mount attacks on the hills to the west of Stanley. The weather closed in, however, and the helicopters could not fly. So off they yomped once more: "Their canvas webbing stiffened and shrank on their shoulders, their hair hung matted on their skulls, the strain of stumbling across the hillside with grenades, weapons and linked-belt ammunition across their chests was etched into each face long before evening. They talked mostly in obscene monosyllables about the f---ing rain, the f---ing choppers that never came for them, the f---ing Argies and the f---ing Falklands."[3]

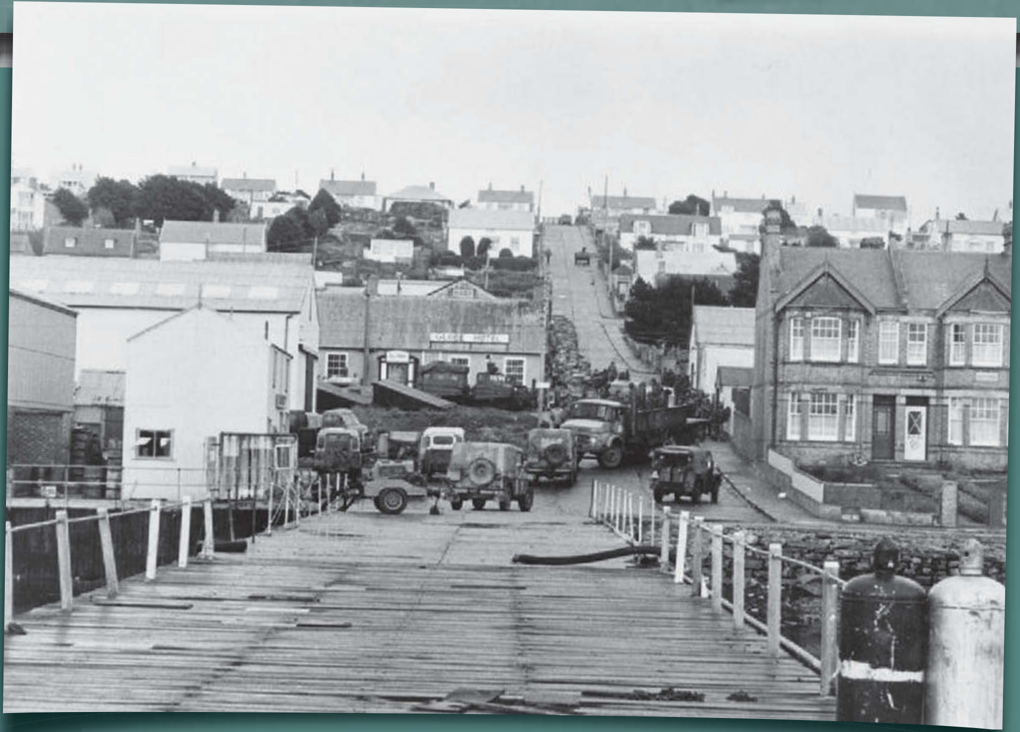
It took them two days to reach Bluff Cove Peak. "The tussock grass hummocks had been especially trying to walk over and boulders and screes had seemed to fill every space where there was no tussock," remembered Gardiner. "We were wet and tired, but we no longer cared. We were now a mere 17km from Stanley. We were completely attuned to our environment and there was certainly no going back ... We had yomped every inch here and we were proud of it. If they had produced helicopters now, we wouldn't have wanted them. We were damned if we weren't going to yomp the whole way."

*

Now it was time for the fighting, but first there was yet more marching. This was a hike up Mount Kent, involving an ascent of about 1,000 feet, over three miles. "We had a dreadful scramble in quite the most ghastly weather I have ever experienced outside the Arctic," Gardiner later wrote. "To say it rained heavily hardly does it justice. It was more like a combination of a wind tunnel and the inside of a car wash, all at around zero degrees centigrade. It blew like hell all day and the torrential freezing rain sliced through our useless waterproofs."

It took X Ray Company two hours to reach the top. There they found very little cover and in the continuing driving wind and rain they were unable to erect their bivvies. Gardiner had no choice but to radio his CO and ask permission to leave the mountain before hypothermia began to take its toll on his men. The weather, for the first and only time, had beaten them at last.[4]

The first phase of the assault on Stanley began on 11 June, with 45 Commando attacking Two Sisters and forcing the Argentines to withdraw with the loss of four marines. Meanwhile, 42 Commando lost one man in capturing Mount Harriet and Goat Ridge. 3 Para attacked Mount Longdon and although



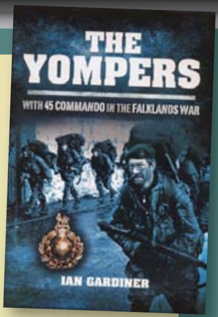
they overran the enemy's position, it was at a heavy cost, losing eighteen men.

The second phase of the assault followed on 14 June with the Gurkhas taking Mount William and 2 Para attacking Wireless Ridge, backed up by heavy shelling from their own artillery and naval guns. They lost three men and found more than 100 Argentine bodies scattered around the ridge. The fiercest hand to hand fighting, however, occurred on Tumbledown, taken by the Scots Guards with the loss of seven men to around thirty Argentines killed. With the British troops now poised to take Stanley itself, the commander of the Argentine garrison in Stanley, Brigadier General Mario Menéndez, surrendered.

As Ian Gardiner observed, Wellington is reputed to have declared that the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton. "Whatever the truth of that may be," Gardiner remarked, "the Falklands War was won on Dartmoor, the Norwegian snowfields, and the sub-Arctic plateau of the Cairngorm Mountains." For it was in those unforgiving lands that the Commandos had learnt to survive and learnt to yomp. ■

THE YOMPERS

With 45 Commando in the Falklands War



Captain Ian Gardiner's words are taken from his book *The Yompers: With 45 Commando in the Falklands War*. Published by Pen & Sword, it is an illuminating account of the Royal Marine Commandos at war. For more information or to place an order, please visit: www.pen-and-sword.co.uk

LEFT: The Falkland Islands Company jetty at Stanley after the Argentine surrender. A mixture of British and Argentine vehicles are parked in the background. Many Royal Marines were delighted to find that their remarkable journey ended at a pub called the Globe Hotel – visible immediately to the left of the road junction. (Glenn Sands Collection)

BELOW: Heavily laden Royal Marines of HQ Company 45 Commando cross a muddy field after leaving Teal Inlet on the last leg of their advance on foot to the mountains around Stanley. (Glenn Sands Collection)

NOTES:

1. Robert Fox, *Eyewitness Falklands: A Personal Account of the Falklands Campaign*, (Methuen, London, 1982), p.225.
2. Hugh McManners, *Forgotten Voices of the Falklands* (Ebury Press, 2008), p.338.
3. Max Hastings and Simon Jenkins, *The Battle for the Falklands* (Book Club Associates, London, 1983), p.263.
4. A number of marines did actually remain on Mount Kenya for many more days. These were the men of 2 (Surveillance) Troop and the Radio Rebroadcast Team, finding what cover they could in the hollows amongst the rocky outcrops.

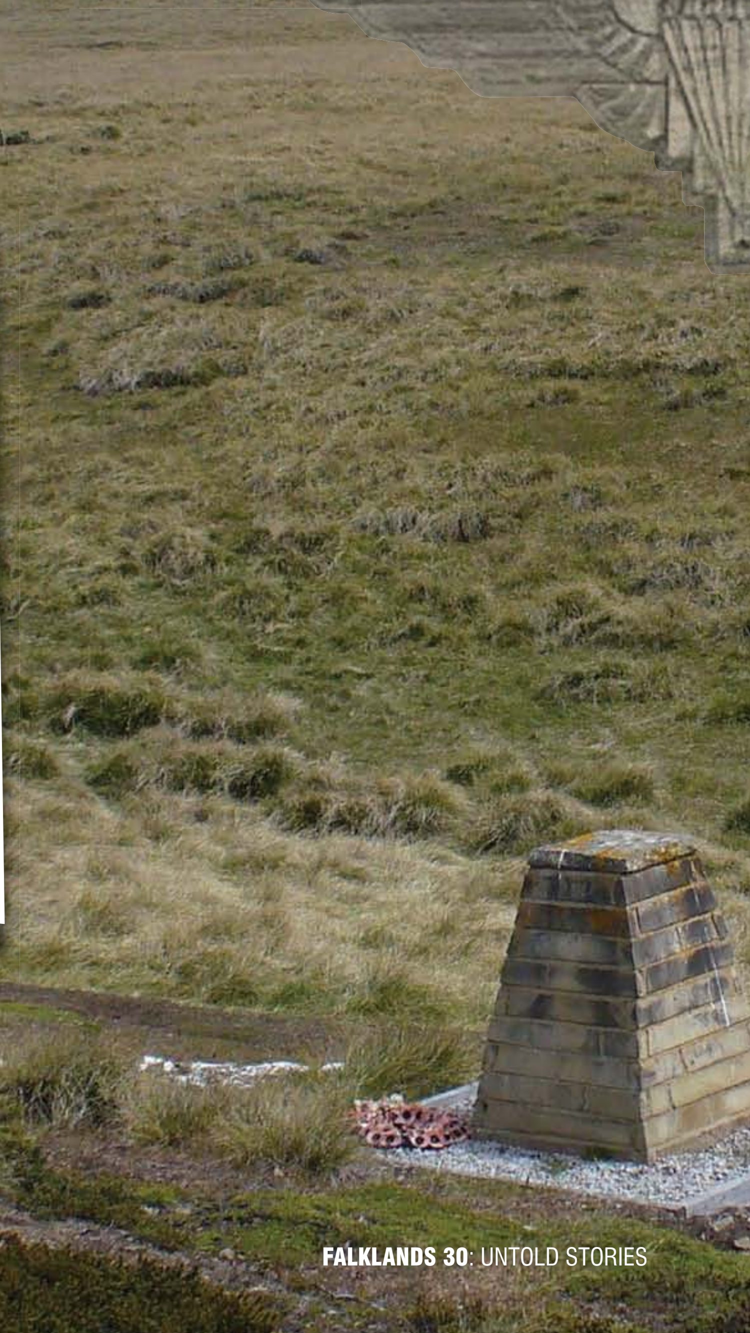
FOR VALOUR

THE STORY BEHIND THE FALKLANDS VCs

Many will be aware of the stories behind the two Victoria Crosses awarded for outstanding valour in the Falklands War. The first of these, chronologically, was that of Lieutenant Colonel Herbert 'H' Jones, the commanding officer of 2nd Battalion the Parachute Regiment (2 Para) during the Battle for Darwin/Goose Green on 28 May 1982, the second being that of Sergeant Ian McKay of 4 Platoon, 'B' Company, 3rd Battalion the Parachute Regiment (3 Para) during the Battle for Mount Longdon on 12 June 1982.

These two awards – both of them posthumous – were announced on Monday, 11 October 1982, in a Supplement to *The London Gazette* of 8 October. The first, that to the ebullient, supremely self-confident and impatient 'H' Jones, has been wreathed in controversy dating back as early as July 1982, during the high level discussions prior to the final recommendation of the award by the Army VC Committee. It is in the substance of these discussions that the seeds of doubt about Jones' judgement at a crucial point in his battalion's struggle to overcome Argentine resistance were planted and which later took root in several written accounts of the Battle of Darwin/Goose Green – much to the ire of his family, friends and those who had served alongside him.

The circumstances of 'H' Jones's VC actions have been well rehearsed in the years since he performed them. Eager to exert some kind of influence over the battle being fought by his 'A' Company – at that point apparently stalled in a gorse gully by Argentine fire from their defence line on Darwin Hill – 'H' Jones had been sucked into the fight and had raced off around the foot of a re-entrant in an attempt to take the positions in the rear. He was shot and killed – Surgeon Commander Rick Jolly later confirmed



MAIN PICTURE: The memorial that marks the spot where Colonel Herbert 'H' Jones fell on 28 May 1982. (All images courtesy of the author unless stated otherwise)

ABOVE: A group of 2 Para veterans approach Goose Green during a pilgrimage undertaken to the Falkland Islands in the years since the conflict. Sussex Mountains, over which the British forces had to advance prior to the battle, can be seen in the background. (Courtesy of Tim Lynch)

The details of the actions which led to the award of two Victoria Crosses in the Falklands War are well-known, but the high level deliberations surrounding the awards which took place between the end of the war on 14 June 1982 and their final announcement on 11 October, are less well documented. Jon Cooksey delves in the archives to find out more.

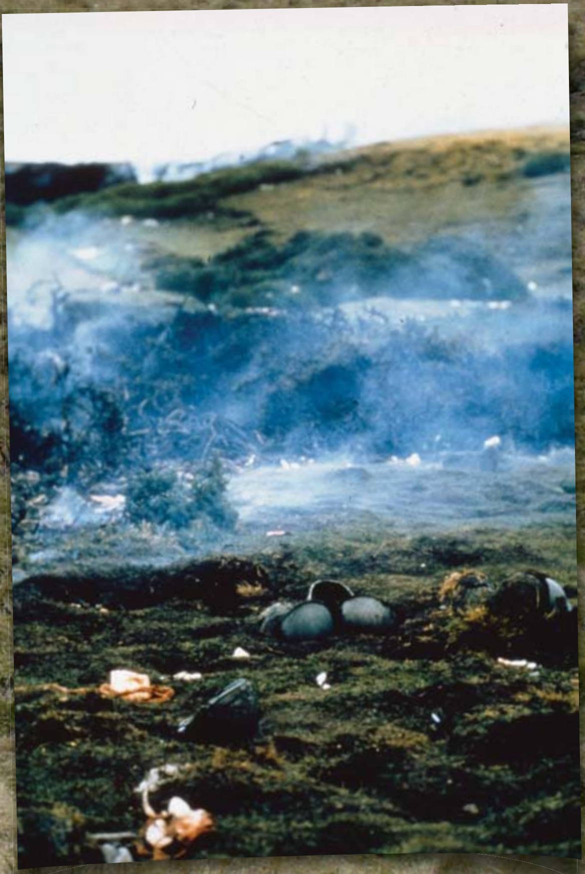
the track of a single high velocity bullet[1] – as he raced up a slope towards an Argentine trench firing his Sterling SMG as he went.

The second Falklands VC and, as it turned out, an historic one as it was the last VC of the Twentieth Century, went to the universally respected, vastly experienced and highly talented professional soldier Ian McKay. In contrast to that awarded to 'H' Jones there has never been any controversy attached to the VC awarded to Ian McKay. In fact as early as 9 August 1982, McKay's VC action in gathering a small group of men together to storm an Argentine heavy machine-gun complex which was then pinning his platoon down on Mount Longdon (and which had been responsible for the wounding of his platoon commander and several more men and was threatening the lives of yet more) was being hailed as the stuff of "Army legend".[2]

Like 'H' Jones a fortnight earlier, Ian McKay was killed during his charge. His body was found the next morning slumped over the lip of a destroyed Argentine machine-gun post, surrounded by debris and three dead Argentines.

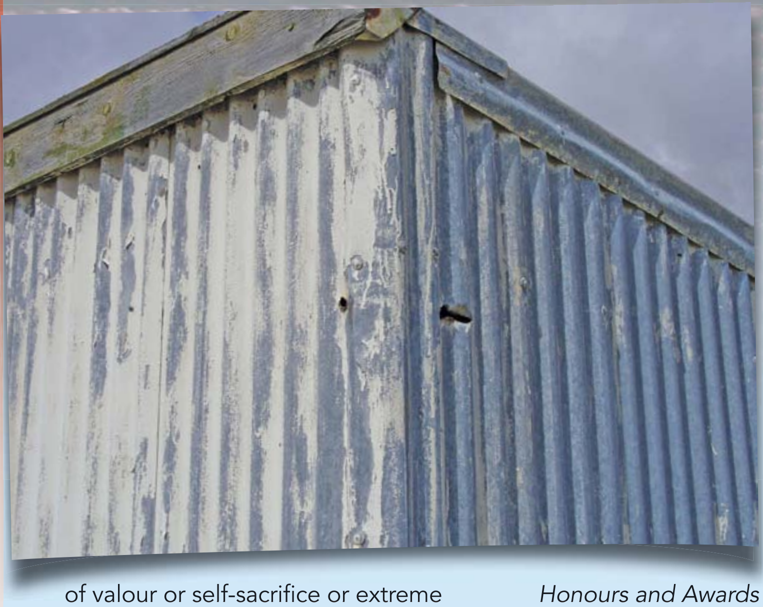
In the cases of both men their battalions eventually went on to secure victories and take Argentine prisoners, but only after more hard and bloody fighting and at a heavy cost in dead and wounded on both sides. However, it is an interesting exercise to adopt a different perspective on the awards by going back and looking at the original papers – now in the National Archives – which document the immediate post-war discussions surrounding them.[3]

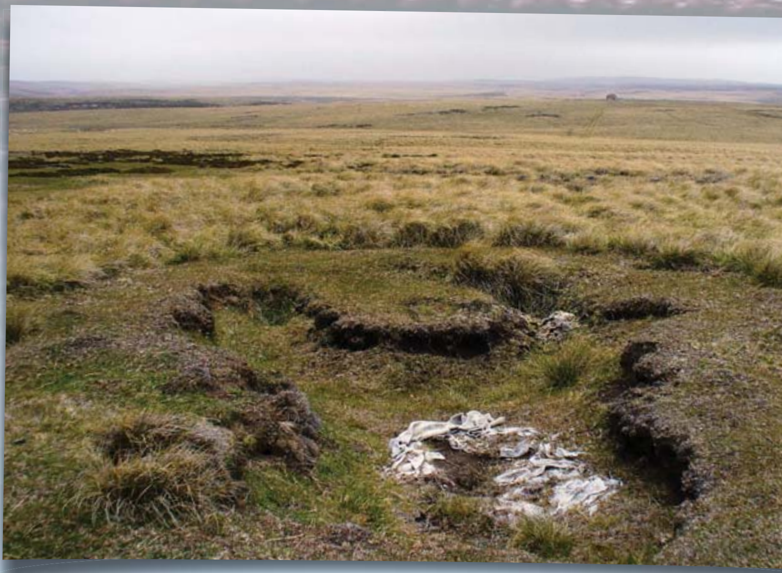
The conditions of the award of the VC, according to Statute Thirdly of the Royal Warrant, are that it "shall only be awarded for most conspicuous bravery or some daring or pre-eminent act



ABOVE LEFT: **The battlefield at Darwin, littered with debris, including helmets and blood-stained field dressings, pictured in the immediate aftermath of the heavy fighting of 28 May 1982. It was during this action that 2 Para lost seventeen men, including their Commanding Officer, Colonel Herbert 'H' Jones.** (Imperial War Museum, FKD355)

ABOVE RIGHT: **The author with a discarded lid from an ammunition box found near Mount Longdon. Twenty-five years of Falklands' weather have failed to completely remove the painted Argentine legend of "RIM 7".**





of valour or self-sacrifice or extreme devotion to duty in the presence of the enemy". In addition, and as a guide, the standard to be applied at the time, according to the pamphlet *Military Honours and Awards 1960,* included a ninety per cent possibility of being killed whilst performing the deed. The army stipulated that each recommendation should be accompanied by the signed statements of three independent witnesses; a joint statement was not permitted.

Initial citations from commanding officers serving in the field and accompanied by the signed statements were then passed up through the chain of command to senior officers – in this case the Commander-in-Chief Fleet and overall Task Force Commander Admiral Sir John Fieldhouse and his Land Deputy, Lieutenant General Sir Richard Trant. It was Lieutenant General Trant's task to expand and fashion the final citations, which had been approved by the commanding officers, for presentation to his immediate superior and, via Admiral Fieldhouse, ultimately to the Army VC Committee.

At this stage both Lieutenant General Trant and Admiral Fieldhouse could offer various levels of support for an award, which could range from a simple and straightforward "recommended" through to "strongly recommended", or even "very strongly recommended". These recommendations were then passed to the Military Secretary, Lieutenant General Sir Roland Guy, who minuted the VC Committee for the Army – this consisted of Guy himself (acting as the VC Committee Secretary), the Chief of the General Staff, the Adjutant General and the Second Permanent Under Secretary at the Ministry of Defence. Eventually the recommendation would be put in front of the Queen by the Prime Minister and the Defence Secretary, with the VC ultimately being awarded only on the Queen's final recommendation.

In the cases of both Lieutenant Colonel Jones and Sergeant McKay the official documents record that both their citations were "very strongly recommended" by Lieutenant General Trant, but only "recommended" by his superior, Admiral Fieldhouse. In the case of Lieutenant Colonel Jones it was clear that there was a good deal of discussion regarding his judgement at a critical time in the struggle for Darwin Hill.

In a paper prepared on 22 July 1982, prior to the meeting of the Army VC Committee at 14.30 hours on Monday, 26 July, to consider the posthumous awards, Lieutenant General Sir Roland Guy, the Military Secretary to the Army, makes the following comments on the recommendations:

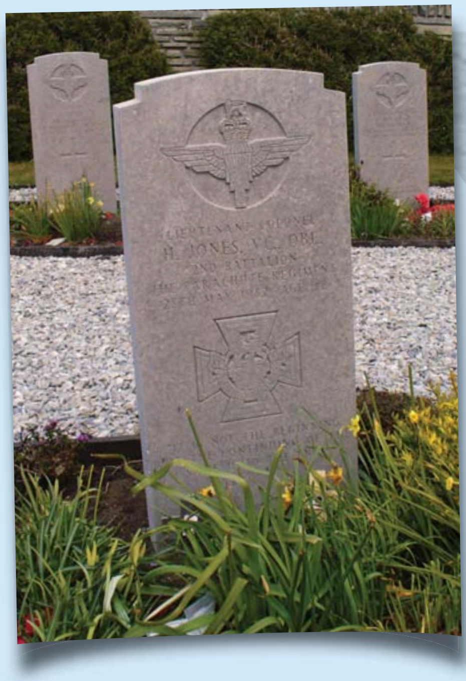
"(1) It can be argued that

ABOVE LEFT: Evidence of the fighting around Goose Green and Darwin – bullet strikes on the tin shed at Goose Green airfield, a structure that still stands today. This was the actual shed where the surrender of the Argentine forces was taken.

ABOVE RIGHT: The weathered remains of an Argentine position on a hill barring the northern end of the Darwin/Goose Green isthmus west of Coronation Point and north of Darwin Pond, which in turn is located just north of Darwin Settlement. The British attackers fought their way through this area during the battle for Darwin/Goose Green.

RIGHT: Colonel 'H' Jones was formally buried in Blue Beach Military Cemetery at San Carlos on 25 October 1982. His headstone today is inscribed with the following quotation: "He is not the beginning but the continuing of the same unto the end." He had been buried initially at Ajax Bay, directly across the water from Blue Beach Cemetery, on Sunday, 30 May 1982. Michael Nicholson, an ITN correspondent, wrote: "We attended the burial of fifteen Paras, including Colonel 'H' Jones. It was a drizzly, dirty cold morning, perfect for funerals, and they dug a long pit. The Paras stood around the pit, which was already filling with water, and they laid out the black body bags. A Royal Marine … stood on the hill just behind the funeral playing a dirge on his fiddle, with soft murmuring of prayer and the body bags being slowly covered by water."

BELOW: An impact strike, from the fighting of May 1982, on a headstone in Darwin cemetery.



IN
LOVING MEMORY
OF

JONES'S action was reckless and that at a critical moment in the attack he needlessly risked his life and showed a lack of judgment rather than conspicuous bravery. It is clear from the citation, however, that his action, which epitomises the determination, drive and offensive spirit which exemplified his leadership of the Battalion, was committed at what was the critical and pivotal moment of the battle; that its effect upon the enemy and his own battalion was decisive and that such action was necessary at that moment to break the stalemate which had already lasted an hour or more.

"(2) The only weak point in the citation is perhaps the last sentence of [paragraph] 3 in which an assumption is made that his courage undermined the enemy's will to fight further. Nevertheless the fact is that JONES's single-minded determination to get on, to close with and destroy the enemy so inspired his own battalion that they went on to achieve a feat of arms which in the event defied all accepted military theory. It set the tenor for subsequent British land operations and gave the enemy a marked sense of inferiority in combat."

Sir Roland did not include in his comments to the VC Committee the remarks of his deputy, who had written in an earlier briefing paper to Sir Roland the day before: "There is no doubt that his VC, if approved, will also, inseparably, be 2 PARA'S VC".

That paper had put forward several examples of earlier awards, those to Lieutenant Colonels Charles Newman (Operation *Chariot*, the raid on St Nazaire Raid on 28 March 1942), and Victor Buller Turner, (El Aqqaqir, during the Second Battle of El Alamein on 27 October 1942) being two examples. These awards were "considered to be not unlike the case for JONES".

A separate tri-services committee had been set up specially by the MoD and was chaired by the Second Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Desmond Cassidi. It was to act in parallel to the task of Admiral Fieldhouse, and "adjudicate on overall standards [the following in italics was inserted by hand] *& to monitor the number of awards* by grades to each Service" actually submitted by him as a result of the war.

In Lieutenant General Guy's briefing paper of 22 July 1982, Admiral Cassidi's committee had commented on the VC recommendation for Lieutenant Colonel Jones as follows: "His was considered to be the key action at a moment of stalemate which probably unlatched the gate to further momentum and ultimate success. There could be a view that his action was hot-headed and ill judged, but this did not detract from the conspicuous bravery he showed. It is worthy of consideration on the same basis."

Despite the possibility of any future controversy over 'H' Jones's wisdom in acting as he did, Lieutenant General Guy nevertheless felt confident enough to conclude that "I recommend the posthumous award of the Victoria Cross".

Ian McKay's claim to the VC was, it seems, never beset by the same misgivings as that of 'H' Jones'. In the briefing paper prepared for Lieutenant General Guy by his deputy on 21 July 1982, Ian McKay's recommendation was seen as a "clear cut case of outstanding leadership, bravery and example shown by a NCO in a desperate situation. Although all those who formed the group he led were either killed or wounded the citation is corroborated by the Platoon Commander [Lieutenant Andrew Bickerdike] and two other members of the platoon".

Once again, examples of earlier awards "of near similar circumstance" to those of Ian McKay were provided for comparative purposes. These were the posthumous awards to Corporal Sidney Bates (Sourdeval, France, 6 August 1944) and Guardsman Edward Charlton (Wistedt, Germany, 21 April 1945). Lieutenant General Guy simply paraphrased the words of his deputy in his recommendation of Ian McKay's award to the VC Committee. "Although few lived to tell the tale here is a case

ABOVE: The 2 Para Group memorial on the hill above Darwin settlement. On the plaque at the top of the cairn are twenty names, including that of Colonel 'H' Jones.

FAR LEFT: A wooden marker near Darwin Pond that once marked the mass grave for forty-nine of the Argentine dead, from the fighting around Goose Green and Darwin, who were buried on 5 June 1982.

LEFT: A view of Argentine positions on Darwin Ridge – Jones attacked up the slope on the opposite side of the gully in the foreground. It was just after 02.30 hours on 28 May when 2 Para launched its attack on the Argentines, the intention being to capture Goose Green "before breakfast". Goose Green lay some thirteen miles south of the site of the major British amphibious landings at San Carlos Water.

of outstanding leadership and example shown by a non-commissioned officer in a desperate situation. I recommend the posthumous award of the Victoria Cross."

Admiral Cassidi's committee was of much the same mind, coming to the unanimous verdict that McKay's action was "a clear cut case of supreme bravery and worthy of consideration for the award".

The files also show that the committees allowed room for manoeuvre should the award of the VC not be confirmed. In the case of 'H' Jones it was recommended that the alternate award should be a posthumous Military Cross, whilst the alternative for Ian McKay would have been a posthumous Distinguished Conduct Medal.

What is not often realised when discussing the VCs of the Falklands War is that right up until the final stage of the process – the meeting of the Army VC Committee – another name had also been in the frame for the award of a posthumous VC as recommended by Admiral Sir John Fieldhouse. That individual was 20-year-old Private Stephen Illingsworth, also of 2 Para.

Private Illingsworth of 'B' Company had already succeeded in rescuing a wounded comrade – Private Hall – under fire as his company were pinned down near Boca House near Goose Green roughly at the same time as 'A' Company were being held in the Gorse Gully. He was killed whilst crawling out again to retrieve Hall's weapon and much-needed ammunition to help his beleaguered platoon. He died within a few hours of his CO, Lieutenant Colonel 'H' Jones.

Like those of 'H' Jones and Ian McKay, Stephen Illingsworth's citation had been "Very Strongly Recommended" by Lieutenant General Sir Richard Trant but Admiral Sir John Fieldhouse – who had issued a straightforward "recommended" for Jones's and McKay's awards – had seen fit to go one better in Stephen Illingsworth's case by issuing a "Strongly Recommended" verdict. That said both Jones and McKay had been given "Priority 1" for the award whilst Illingsworth's was placed at "Priority 3"

In his recommendation Lieutenant General Trant had noted that: "For his outstanding courage, his dedication to others and his total disregard for his own safety, Private Illingsworth is strongly recommended for the award of a posthumous Victoria Cross."

Admiral Fieldhouse noted that: "Private Illingsworth's heroic acts of total disregard for his own safety were in the highest traditions of his regiment. He was an inspiration to others and is strongly recommended for the posthumous award of the Victoria Cross."

As he passed his recommendation on to the VC Committee, Lieutenant General Sir Roland Guy wrote: "Illingsworth's actions were heroic and selfless and must have been carried out in the full knowledge of what he was risking. To save a wounded comrade under fire and then immediately to attempt to recover his ammunition epitomises the very best of soldierly qualities.

"However, brave though he was, his action does not match the standard of action of Lt Col Jones and Sgt McKay. I am not convinced that this action, although pre-mediated, warrants the highest award. I believe his case deserves the posthumous award of the Distinguished Conduct Medal which is awarded 'for distinguished conduct in action in the field'. This refers to bravery of a high standard. If possible a degree of leadership should also have been displayed'."

The VC Committee heeded Lieutenant General Guy's advice and Private Illingsworth was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal. Guy's reasoning may have been the key factor in reducing Illingsworth's award at the final hurdle, but it is possible that there were other forces at work.

As noted above, the press had caught wind of what it considered "top level resistance" to the granting of three VCs to members of the same regiment in the "committee … which is vetting the proposals for Falklands' campaign decorations".[4] That committee was the one headed by Admiral Cassidi.

In his paper to Lieutenant General Guy of 21 July 1982, his deputy refers to that tri-service committee and notes that "in this setting Second Sea Lord has commented …" At this point a large swathe of the text of the document has been excised thus removing the comments of the Second Sea Lord. Can we infer from this that the missing text contains negative or contentious comments regarding the number of VCs and other awards being claimed by and recommended for the Parachute

TOP: Sergeant Ian John McKay, then a Platoon Sergeant of a Recruit Platoon at the Parachute Regiment Depot at Aldershot, can be seen sitting fifth from right in the front row.

LEFT: The last man to see Ian McKay alive. Corporal Ian Bailey, who was seriously wounded by bullets in the hip, neck and fingers during his charge on the Argentine positions with Ian McKay, pictured at Teal Inlet just over a week before the battle for Longdon.

BELOW: The wooden cross which some think marks the spot where 29-year-old Sergeant Ian McKay was killed in the attack on Mount Longdon during the night of 11/12 June 1982.

LEFT: **In December 1992, 3 Para's CO in 1982, Hew Pike (by then promoted to Major General), returned to the Falkland Islands to pay his respects to his fallen comrades at the summit of Mount Longdon.** (Photographed by the late Terry Peck, via Author)

RIGHT: **The body of Sergeant Ian McKay VC was returned to the United Kingdom and, in turn, buried in Aldershot Military Cemetery on 26 November 1982. His Victoria Cross is on display in the Extraordinary Heroes permanent exhibition in the Ashcroft Gallery at the Imperial War Museum, London.**

Regiment?

At the time of the deliberations Admiral Cassidi had already effectively blocked the recommendation for a VC to Lieutenant Commander John Sephton RN, since it was "not considered strong enough".

Sephton, a Lynx helicopter pilot aboard the doomed HMS *Ardent*, was killed in action on 21 May 1982, firing a Sterling sub-machine gun at Argentine 'planes during their bomb runs. He was last seen on the exposed Flight Deck alongside his observer Brian Murphy – who was armed with a Bren gun – both of them firing vertically into the air at the belly of the Argentine A4 Skyhawk the instant before it dropped the bomb which killed them. *Ardent*'s skipper, Commander, now Lord Alan West, a former head of the Royal Navy, Labour Government minister and the man who initiated Sephton's citation, recorded that his action was "real cowboy stuff". Sephton was awarded a posthumous Distinguished Service Cross for attempting to defend his ship.[5]

Lieutenant General Guy had already been furnished with details of a comparison of the awards to soldiers of 1st Battalion, the Gloucestershire Regiment for actions in the Battle of Imjin River in Korea between 22-25 April 1952, and the number proposed for 2 and 3 Para for Operation *Corporate*. His advice for the Army VC Committee ran as follows:

"It is not for the VC Committee to make any judgement on what would be the appropriate number of VCs to award for this campaign in comparison with the numbers that have been awarded in past campaigns. The Committee's task is to assess whether the citations submitted meet the standards required as set by the warrant and by precedent. However, there will inevitably be great public interest over whether the award is in any way being cheapened if an excessive number are awarded … Despite the short length of the Op *Corporate* campaign, I believe the intensity of operations was such that 2 or possibly 3 VCs would be justified in the circumstances. Although it will be for either the MoD Honours Committee or the HD Committee [Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals] to consider this point."

It is now a matter of record that the VC Committee agreed to the award of a posthumous Victoria Cross to both Lieutenant Colonel 'H' Jones and Sergeant Ian McKay. The emblems of the VC carved on their headstones today bear witness to their titanic achievements thirty years ago. ■

NOTES

1. Rick Jolly OBE, *The Red and Green Life Machine* (Saltash: Red and Green Books, Palamanando Publishing, 2007) pp.114-115.
2. Philip Webster, Paratroop VC Proposals Meet Top Level Resistance, *The Times*, 9 August 1982, p.1.
3. *Recommendations for Honours and Awards – Army (1965 1980)*. The National Archives, WO373/188.
4. Philip Webster, *op. cit.*
5. See the Supplement to *The London Gazette* of 8 October 1982, p.12834 published on 11 October for Sephton's citation. The only other man whose name appears in the WO373/188 documentation with reference to a possible VC recommendation is Marine Engineering Artificer 1st Class Kenneth Enticknap who also served aboard HMS *Ardent* and although badly injured survived. It appears that there was a possibility that Admiral Fieldhouse would put forward a recommendation for fire fighting and damage control aboard HMS *Ardent* on 21 May 1982, but it never materialised. A citation was prepared for the award of the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal but he eventually received the Queen's Gallantry Medal.

RIGHT: **The memorial to those who died on Mount Longdon. 3 PARA lost twenty-two killed during the battle, in addition to one Royal Engineer from 9 Para Squadron attached to 3 PARA. Two of the 3 PARA dead – Privates Ian Scrivens and Jason Burt – were only 17 years old, whilst Private Neil Grose had turned 18 on the day of the attack. A total of forty-eight British paratroopers were wounded during the battle.**

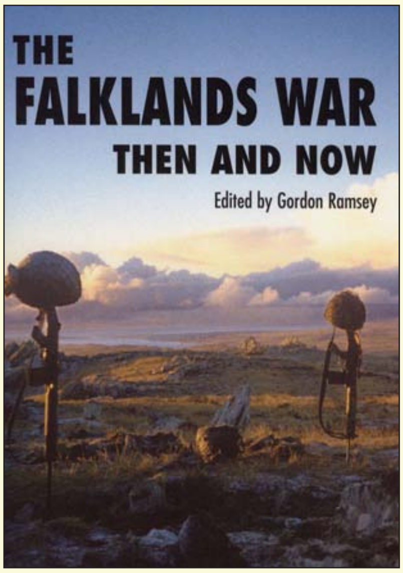
AFTER THE BATTLE

In 1982, Argentina rashly gambled that a full-scale invasion of the Falkland Islands — ownership of which had been disputed with Great Britain for over a century — would put an end to years of political wrangling. However Britain's response was to immediately despatch a task force to recover the islands, by force if necessary.

The 'conflict' which followed (a formal declaration of war was never given) lasted ten weeks from Argentine invasion to British liberation, the white heat of battle using 20th century technology contrasting with bitter hand-to-hand bayonet fighting in inhospitable conditions.

Eyewitness accounts by the participants of both sides, and islanders, leave us in no doubt as to the ferocity of the combat on land, sea, and in the air. Comparison photography in colour of all the battlefields, the crash sites of the aircraft shot down, the relics and the remains, together with portraits of those who lost their lives and the battlefield memorials, serve as a graphic testimony to their endeavours, 25 years after the battle.

A Roll of Honour lists the casualties of both sides and, for the first time, the graves of all the British fallen — both on the islands and in the United Kingdom — have been visited and photographed as a lasting record of all those who made the supreme sacrifice in what is most probably Britain's last colonial war.



A painstaking piece of work and will be a fitting tribute to those who took part in the war.

WILL TOWNEND (5 Infantry Brigade HQ)

You have managed to tell the readers that we were human beings with feelings, great heart, and courage to face death regardless the political objectives of war.

HECTOR SANCHEZ (Grupo 5 de Caza, Argentine Air Force)

An absolutely fascinating book.

MARK EYLES-THOMAS
(3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment)

I feel that I speak for all those who took part in the war that we are honoured by the thorough historical detail that you have put into this project.

JERRY POOK, DFC (No. 1 Squadron, RAF, HMS *Hermes*)

A concise mammoth production.

PATRICK WATTS (Falkland Islands radio announcer, 1982)

A very fine tribute to those who fought and really fills in the emotional gaps left by previous histories of the conflict.

DAVID MORGAN, DSC
(800 Naval Air Squadron, HMS *Hermes*)

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BRINGS HISTORY TO LIFE

WAR PRIZES:

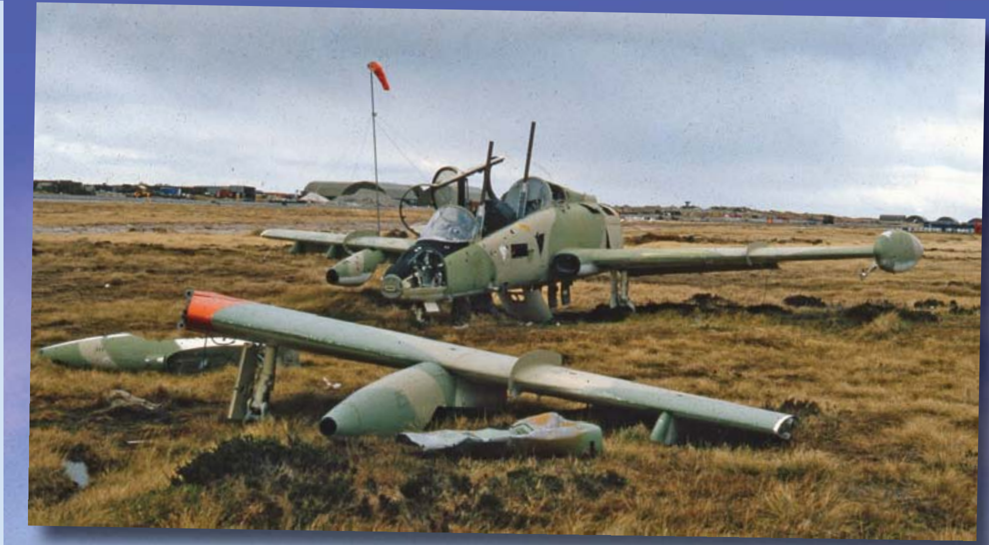
CAPTURED ARGENTINE AIRCRAFT

Once the Argentines in the Falkland Islands had surrendered there were considerable spoils of war to be gathered, examined and used by the British forces. As Geoff Simpson reveals, amongst the larger items of hardware were a number of aircraft of various types.

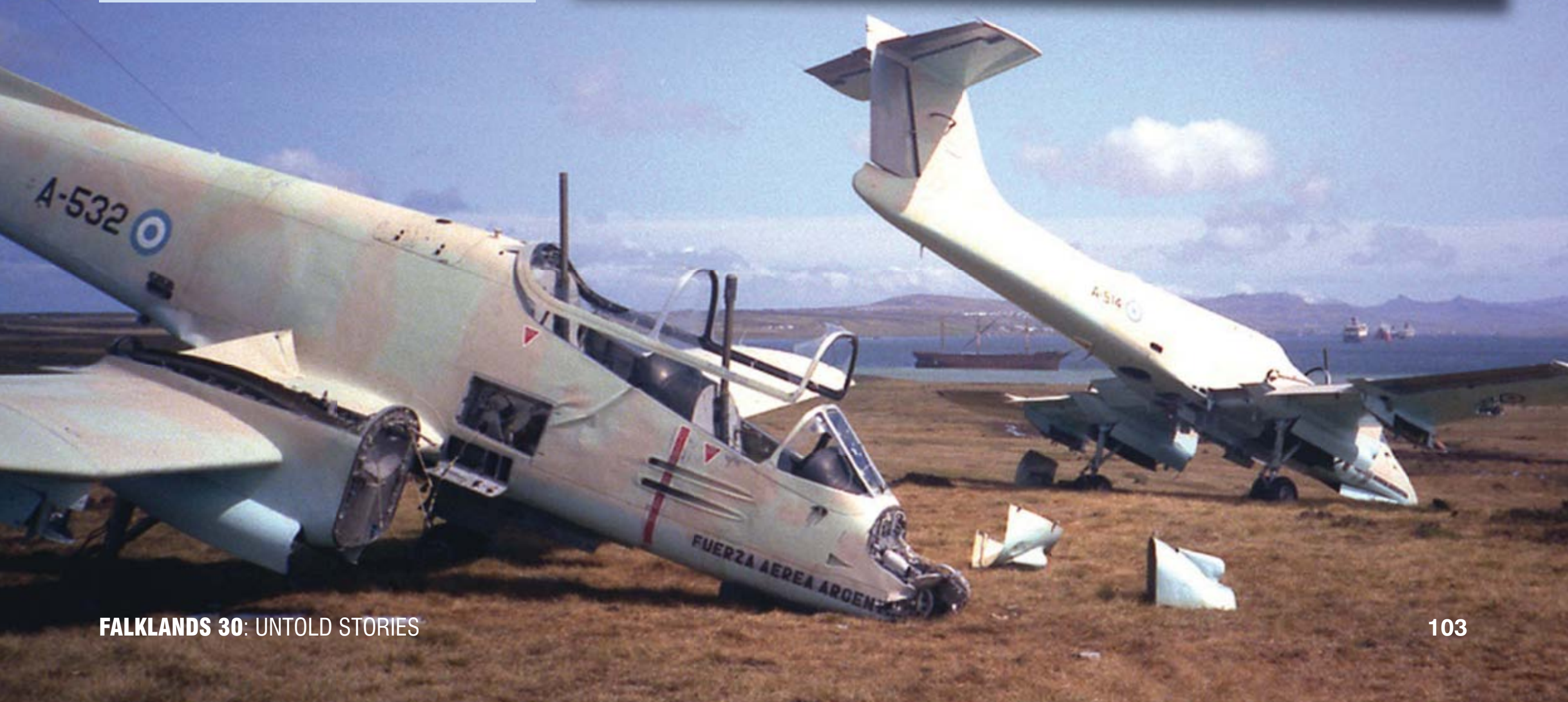
Complete ex-Falkland Islands Argentine aircraft and sections of others have been spread around the world over the last thirty years, sometimes changing ownership on a number of occasions. At least thirty-three aircraft were recovered by the British forces after the Argentine surrender. Fifteen of these had been operated by the *Fuerza Aérea Argentina*, and consisted of thirteen Pucarás (eleven from Port Stanley and two at Goose Green), three Aermacchi MB-339s found at Port Stanley, which, along with a Beechcraft T-34C Mentor from Pebble Island, had been flown by the *Armada de la República Argentina*. Meanwhile, a Puma and a Short Skyvan had been Coast Guard airframes, whilst a Chinook, a pair of Augusta 109s and nine Bell UH-1Hs helicopters, again at Port Stanley, had been used by the Argentine Army.[1]

The Aermacchi MB-339 trainer and light attack aircraft entered service with the Italian Air Force in 1979 and with the Argentinian Navy in 1981. A number operated from Stanley during the conflict, one causing slight damage to HMS *Argonaut* on 21 May. On 27 May an Aermacchi was shot down by a Blowpipe missile, with the pilot killed, during the battle at Goose Green. One of the three aircraft captured was, for a time, listed on the inventory of the Fleet Air Arm at Yeovilton.

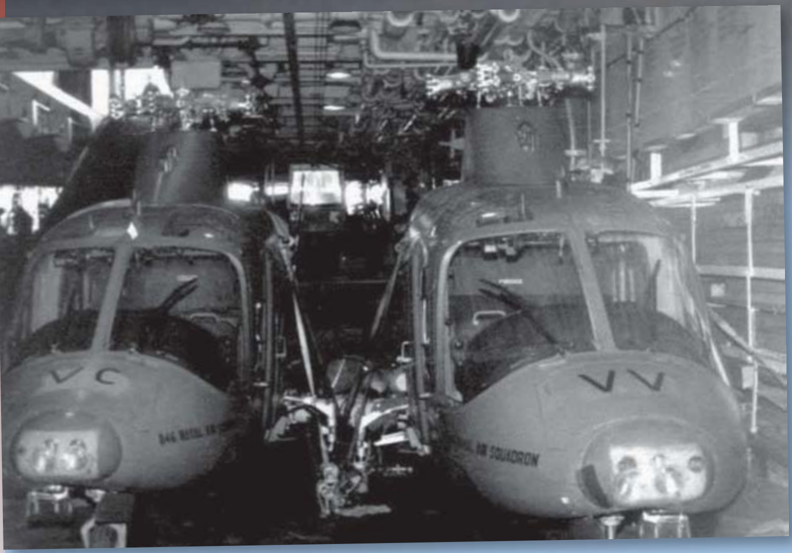
Operated by both the Argentine Air Force and Navy, the Beechcraft T-34C Mentor was a training aircraft which became the Turbo Mentor. During the Falklands War, four T-34C-1s were deployed to Port Stanley on 25 April

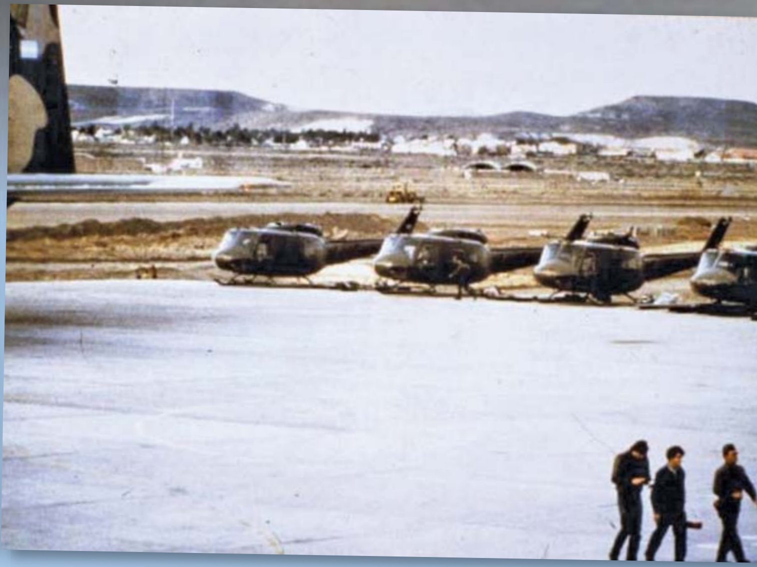


RIGHT: **One of the Aermacchi MB339As that were lost by the Argentines during the Falklands War. Having been operated by 1 *Escuadrilla de Ataque*, it was captured at Port Stanley (where this picture was taken). It remained on show at the airfield for a short time before, like the Pucarás mentioned previously, being dumped in a pit. Parts of it are also believed to have been sent to a weapons range.** (Courtesy of Tony Dixon)



BELOW: **A fascinating shot of two damaged Pucarás lying at the end of the runway at Port Stanley. The nearest, A-532, was later taken to a weapons range for use as a target. A-514 lingered at the airfield for couple of years before being dumped into a pit as part of a clear up prior to the airport being handed back to the local government. Between the two aircraft, in the background, can be seen another, more famous, Falklands wreck; the iron-ship "The Lady Elizabeth". Interestingly, the wreck was used during the conflict by the SAS as a covert observation post from where they reported back on Argentine sea and aircraft movements.** (Courtesy of Ian Howat)





1982, to be used in a reconnaissance role. The type's main encounter with British forces occurred on 1 May 1982, when three Turbo-Mentors attacked a Royal Navy Sea King in the area of Berkeley Sound. However, they were then intercepted by Sea Harriers, with one of the T-34Cs being damaged by cannon fire.

The four T-34C-1 Turbo-Mentors continued to operate, flying a few reconnaissance missions, but were redeployed to Pebble Island where they were ultimately destroyed by the SAS on 15 May 1982. Although all four hulks remained on the island for a considerable length of time, eventually, one airframe, 0729/(1-A)411, was recovered on 10 June 1983, and transported to the Fleet Air Arm Museum.

ABOVE LEFT: The two Augusta 109 helicopters captured at the end of the fighting in 1982 pictured en route back to the United Kingdom. Both airframes are reported to still be in service with the British Armed Forces, being operating by 8 Flight, Army Air Corps. The Flight operates in direct support of 22 Special Air Service Regiment, and its inventory consists of two Gazelle and four Augusta 109 helicopters, two of latter being the ex-Argentine examples. To enable the Augustas to move members of 22 SAS covertly and without attracting undue attention, they are painted in civilian livery. (Glenn Sands Collection)

ABOVE RIGHT: Argentine Huey helicopters at Port Stanley airfield shortly after being flown in by C-130 Hercules transport aircraft from Argentina. The helicopters have not yet been fitted with their rotors. (Glenn Sands Collection)

BELOW: This Pucará, A-529, was one of the aircraft targeted by the SAS during their raid on the airstrip at Pebble Island. After the surrender it was moved to East Falkland, stored for a time at Mount Pleasant, the intention being to place it on display, and then eventually moved to a range. It has been reported that it has since been scrapped. (Courtesy of Tony Dixon)

The Bell UH-1 Iroquois, widely known as the Huey (from its original designation of HU-1) and famed for its distinctive noise, was developed as a utility helicopter, with casualty evacuation a speciality, for the US Army. Both the Argentine Air Force and Army deployed Hueys to the Falklands in 1982, nine with the former and two with the latter. They performed general transport and SAR missions and were based at Port Stanley. Two of the Hueys were destroyed and, after the hostilities had ended, the balance was captured by British forces. At least three of the aircraft were reused by the British ferrying supplies and troops.

Some of the Hueys were operated by 656 Squadron Army Air Corps and 820 Naval Air Squadron during their time in the South Atlantic. One example, AE-409 is on display at the Museum of Army Flying at Middle Wallop, whilst a second, AE-422, is in the collection of the Fleet Air Arm Museum. Another of the UH-1Hs was civil registered as G-HUEY in the UK and participated in a number of airshows, as well as appearing in a James Bond film.

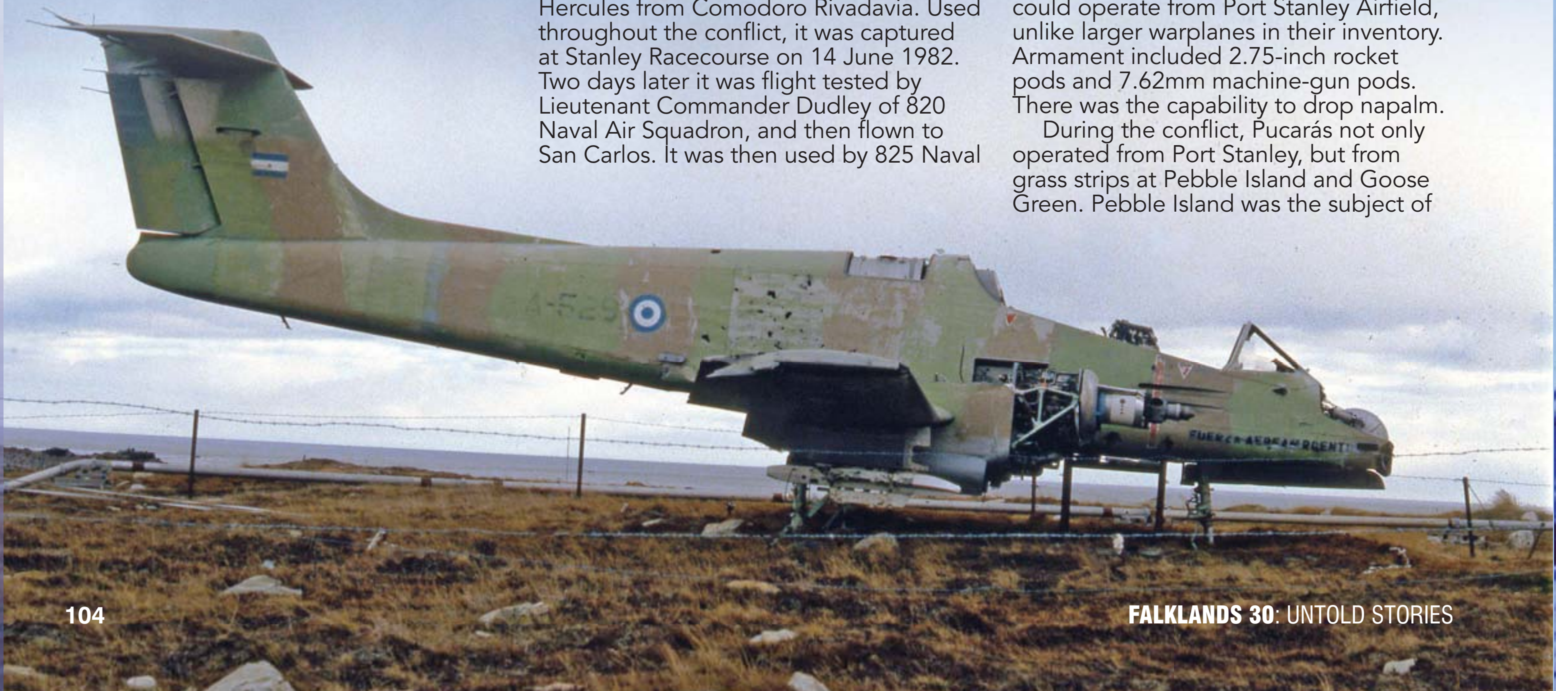
AE-409 arrived at Port Stanley airfield on 29 April 1982, having been airlifted by Hercules from Comodoro Rivadavia. Used throughout the conflict, it was captured at Stanley Racecourse on 14 June 1982. Two days later it was flight tested by Lieutenant Commander Dudley of 820 Naval Air Squadron, and then flown to San Carlos. It was then used by 825 Naval Air Squadron, who flew a further thirty hours on it. On 13 July, it was flown out to be loaded onto *Atlantic Causeway*, and ultimately transported to the UK, arriving at Yeovilton on 29 July 1982. As for AE-409, it was used for a time by 656 Squadron in the Falklands.

Perhaps the best known captured aircraft today are the Pucarás. At close quarters and in non-threatening situations people can find the FMA 1A Pucará rather an attractive aircraft. However, it went into the Falklands conflict with a nasty reputation earned in its roles in counter-insurgency and ground attack with the Argentine forces. Built by what was then *Fabrica Militar de Aviones*, based in Cordoba, the Pucará was a low-wing, all metal aircraft with two turbo prop engines and a retractable undercarriage. With a crew of two, the aircraft was named after an early type of South American stone fortress.

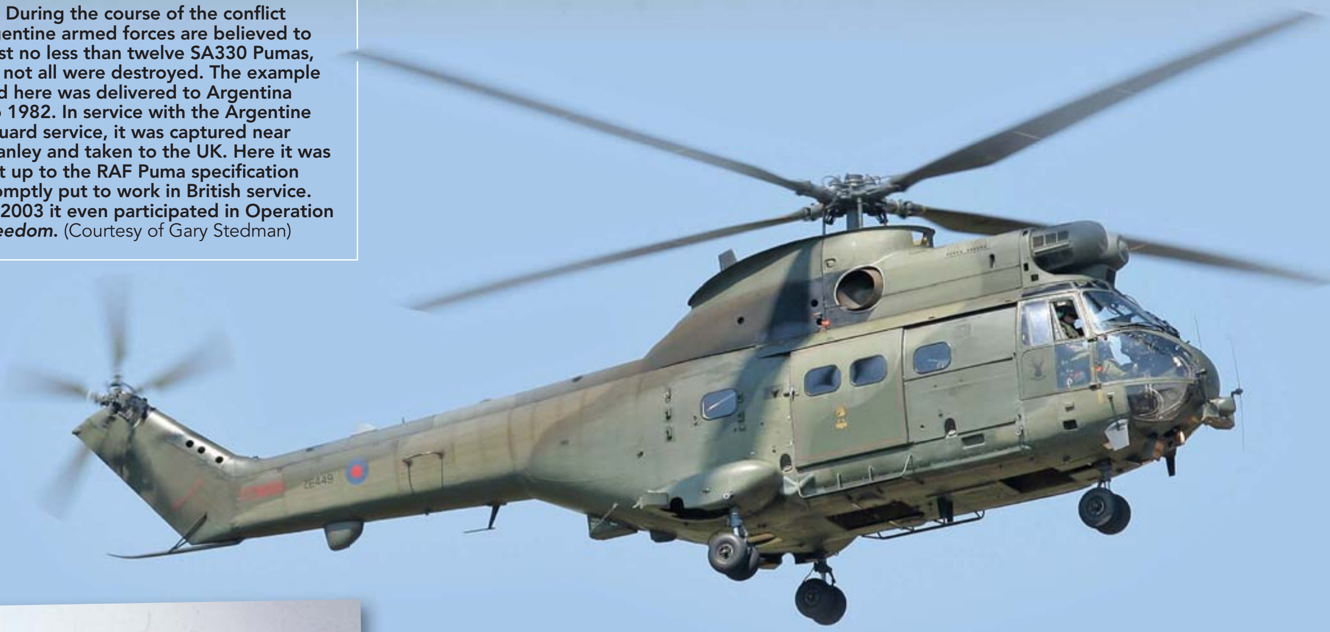
The Pucará was developed from 1966 and first flew in August 1969. Operation was possible from remote airfields lacking all facilities. Deliveries to Argentine forces started in 1976.

When the invasion of the Falklands occurred the Pucará, almost 100 of which were available, was a particularly useful aircraft for the Argentines as it could operate from Port Stanley Airfield, unlike larger warplanes in their inventory. Armament included 2.75-inch rocket pods and 7.62mm machine-gun pods. There was the capability to drop napalm.

During the conflict, Pucarás not only operated from Port Stanley, but from grass strips at Pebble Island and Goose Green. Pebble Island was the subject of



RIGHT: **During the course of the conflict the Argentine armed forces are believed to have lost no less than twelve SA330 Pumas, though not all were destroyed. The example pictured here was delivered to Argentina prior to 1982. In service with the Argentine coast guard service, it was captured near Port Stanley and taken to the UK. Here it was brought up to the RAF Puma specification and promptly put to work in British service. During 2003 it even participated in Operation *Iraq Freedom.*** (Courtesy of Gary Stedman)



a raid on 10 May 1982, by 'D' Squadron, 22 SAS, in which six Pucarás, four TMC Mentors and one Short Skyvan transport were destroyed. The raiding party only suffered two lightly wounded casualties.

Three Pucarás were destroyed at Goose Green by cluster bombs from Sea Harriers and the first Stinger surface-to-air missile to be launched in combat (also by 'D' Squadron, 22 SAS) claimed one, while another was shot down by a Sea Harrier flown by Commander Nigel "Sharkey" Ward DSC, AFC, RN. Small arms fire from 2 Para also claimed a Pucará.

A Pucará claimed the only confirmed Argentinian air-to-air victory of the war, though it was hardly an equal fight, when, during the fighting for Goose Green on 28 May, it shot down a Westland Scout helicopter, killing the Royal Marines pilot, Lieutenant Richard Nunn, who was awarded a posthumous DFC.

Of the captured Pucarás, four of them were in flying condition, and of the total at least six were transported to the United Kingdom. One of these was the aircraft with the serial A-515.

A-515 was one of twelve Pucarás flown to the Falklands from mid-May, probably as one of five attrition replacement aircraft sent from Santa Cruz to Port Stanley airport on 27/28 May, where a darker green/brown camouflage scheme more appropriate to operations in the Falklands was crudely applied over the lighter standard scheme. Thus it was one of the last Pucarás to reach the islands to reinforce the *Escuadron Aeromovil Malvinas*. This force received twenty-four Pucarás, all of which were destroyed or captured. On 14 June, A-515 was captured at Port Stanley in a lightly damaged but airworthy condition, with underwing rocket pods fitted, one of only three or four Pucarás still airworthy in the Falklands at the end of the campaign.

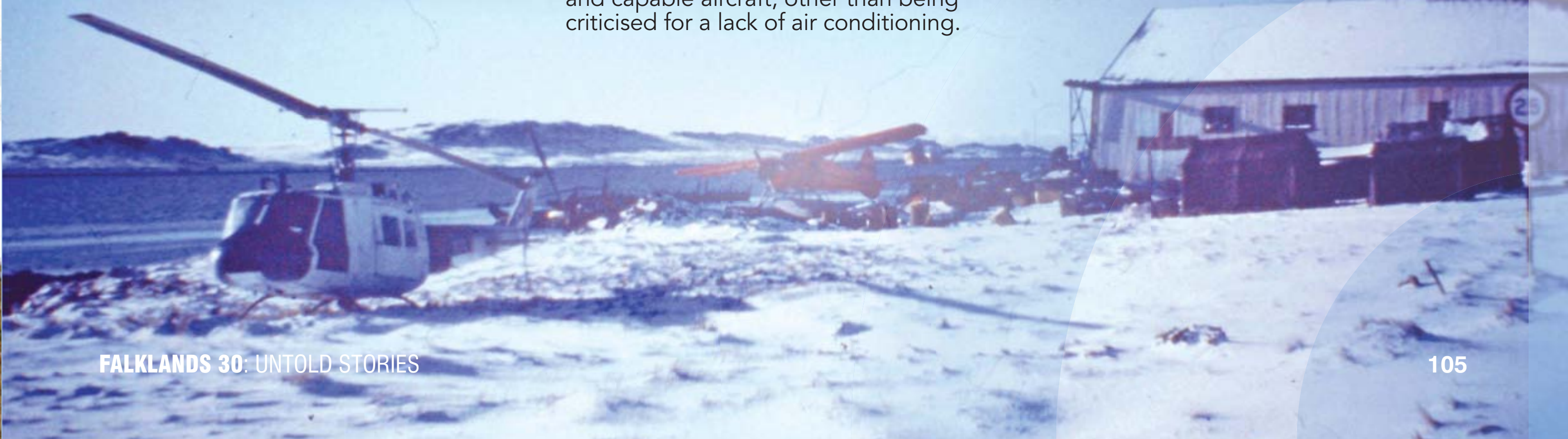
Interestingly, this aircraft was used extensively on evaluation and test flights once it arrived back in the UK (another airframe transported by *Atlantic Causeway*). The flight trials began on 28 April 1983, when A-515 was flown by the Aeroplane and Armament Experimental Establishment's (A&AEE) Squadron Leader Russell Peart. These test flights included take-offs from grass, on which the Pucará performed well. It was flown in simulated combat against many types including the Sea Harrier and Phantom F4 and proved to be a robust and capable aircraft, other than being criticised for a lack of air conditioning. Simulated attacks against the Rapier missile system were also carried out in June 1983, as were comparison flight tests alongside an RAF Sea King and Puma.

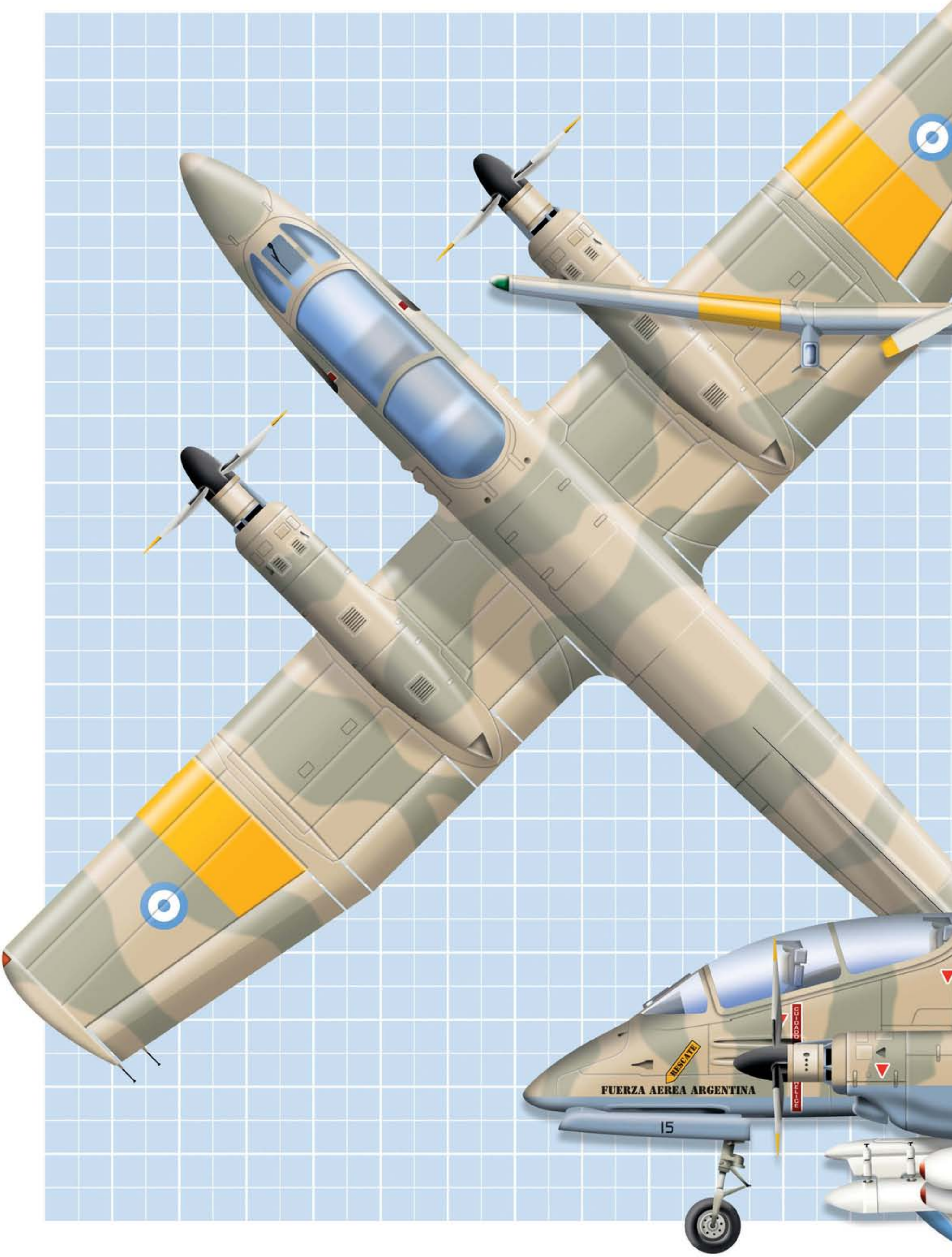
While the RAF found the Pucará to have attractive characteristics, not only were they not convincing enough to justify developing the aircraft for British use, but there was actually a better candidate around in the shape of the American Fairchild Republic A-10. Consequently, no useful function for such a type in the RAF could be envisaged.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Graydon served as Chief of the Air Staff between 1992 and 1997. As a Group Captain he was Officer Commanding RAF Stanley in the aftermath of the Falklands conflict. "The Pucará was very difficult to knock out of the air if it had seen the fighters attacking it, as helicopters can be," he

ABOVE LEFT: **Huey AE-409 pictured flying with an escort provided by 656 Squadron Army Air Corps Westland Scout. Whilst being operated by the British, the captured Hueys had to be repainted with a distinctive, non-military colour to prevent misidentifications.** (Courtesy of the Museum of Army Flying)

BELOW: **Now at the Museum of Army Flying at Middle Wallop, this is the captured Huey AE-409 pictured near the Falkland Islands Government Air Service hangar at the western end of Stanley after the Argentine surrender. Note the de Havilland Canada DHC-2 Beaver single-engine, high-wing, propeller-driven, STOL aircraft in the background.** (Courtesy of the Museum of Army Flying)

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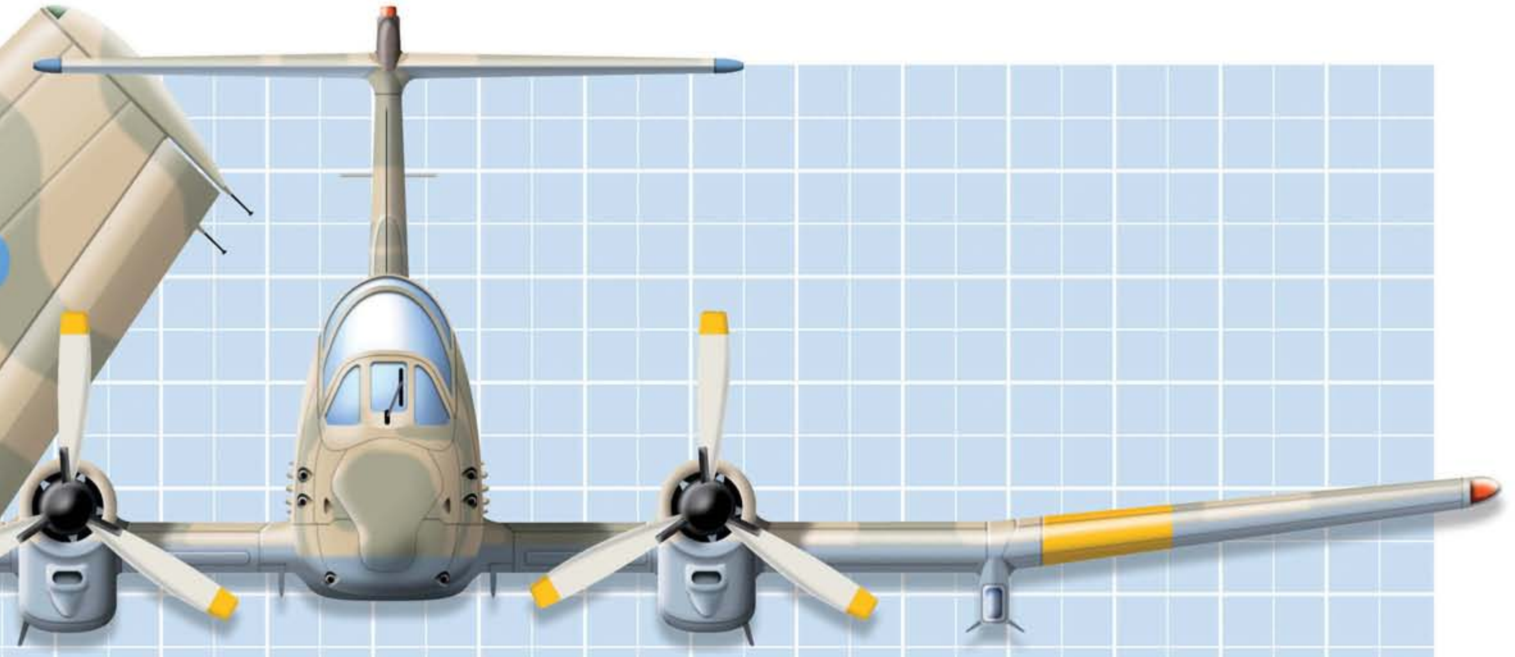


FMA 1A 58 Pucara A-515

Royal Air Force Museum, Cosford

FUERZA AEREA ARGENTINA

(© The Trustees of the RAF Museum)

General Specification

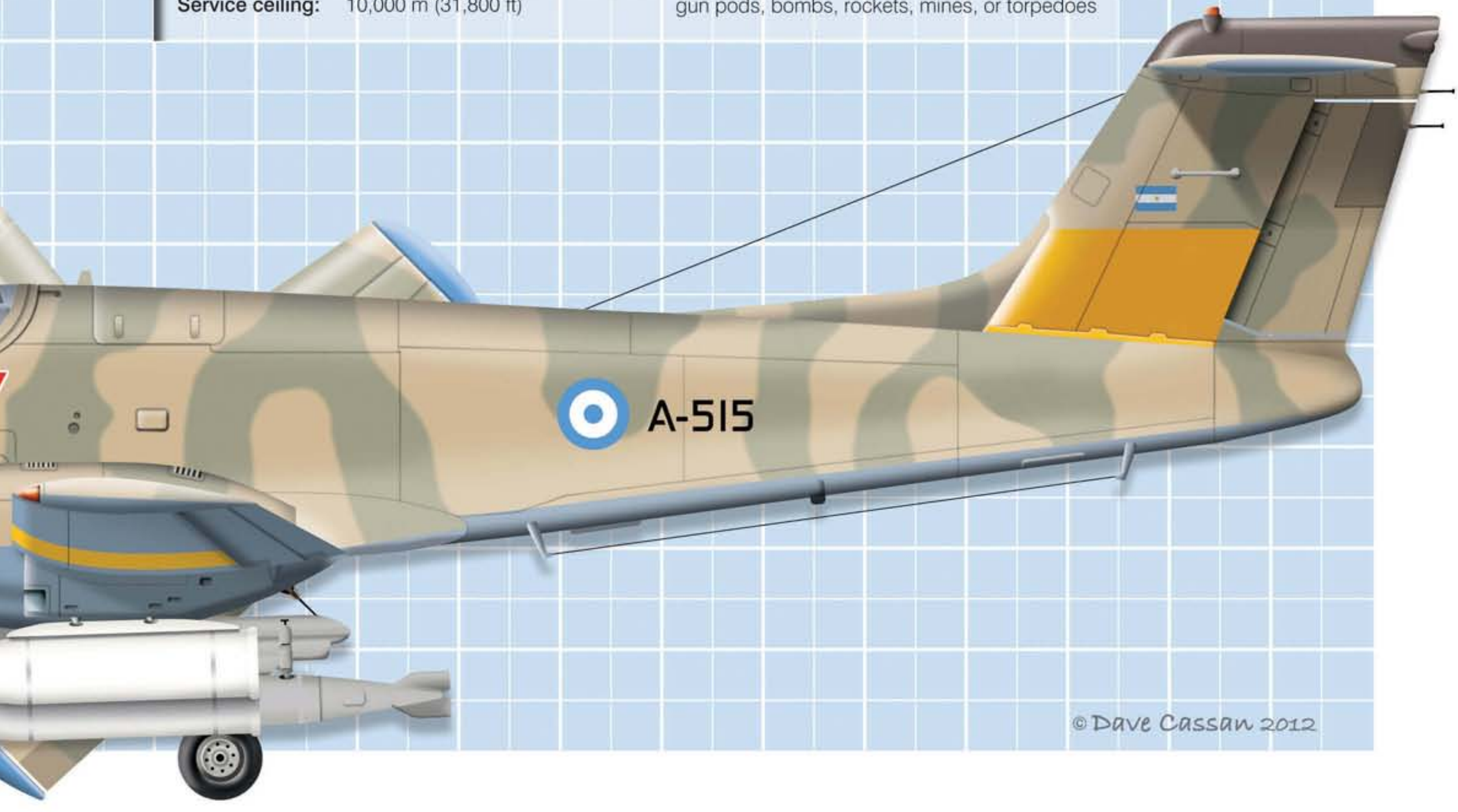
Crew:	2
Length:	14.25 m (46 ft 9 in)
Wingspan:	14.5 m (47 ft 6 in)
Height:	5.36 m (17 ft 7 in)
Empty weight:	4,020 kg (8,862 lb)
Gross weight:	6,800 kg (14,991 lb)
Powerplant:	2 × Turbomeca Astazou XVIG turboprops

Performance

Maximum speed:	500 km/h (310 mph)
Cruising speed:	430 km/h (267 mph)
Range:	3,710 km (2,305 miles)
Service ceiling:	10,000 m (31,800 ft)

Armament

2 × 20 mm Hispano-Suiza HS.804 autocannons
4 × 7.62 mm FN Browning machine-guns
3 × hardpoints for up to 1,500 kg (3,300 lb) of gun pods, bombs, rockets, mines, or torpedoes



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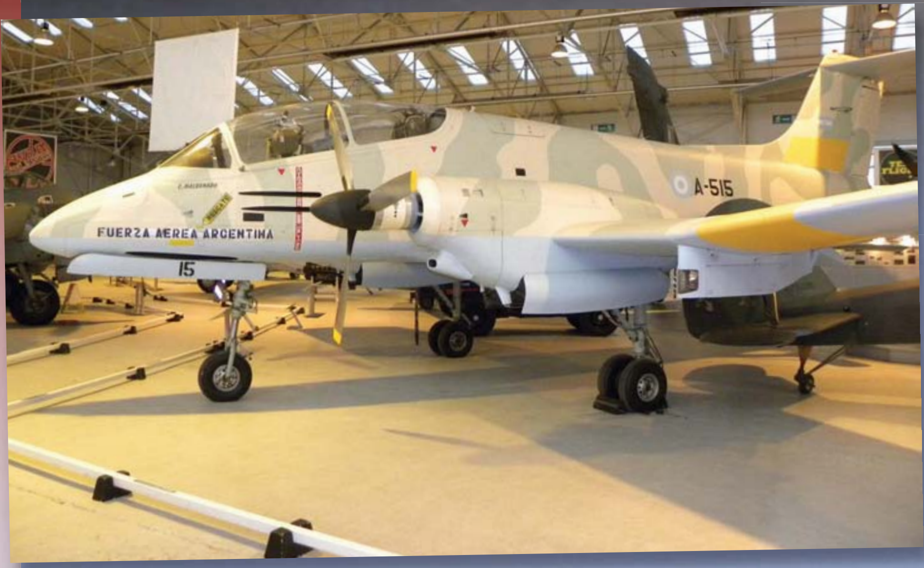
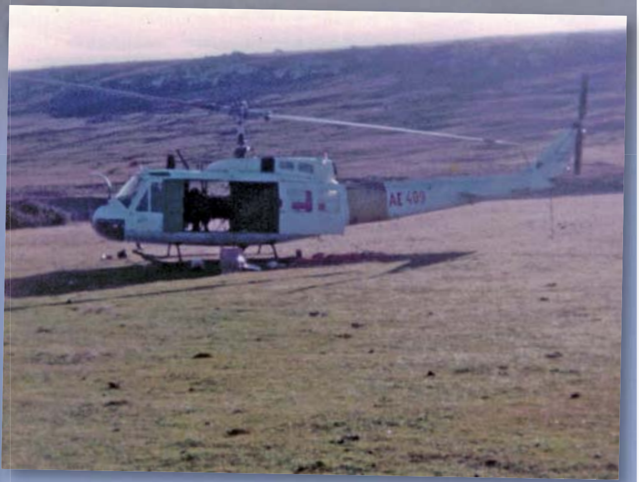




states. "It was able to hold off a single F4 by constantly turning into it, so the ideal method of attack was to operate in pairs. Pucarás were pretty limited in what they could carry – the A-10 was an infinitely better aircraft."

When Group Captain Graydon, as he then was, arrived to take command of RAF Stanley in 1983, the British military assumption was that a further outbreak of hostilities was possible and had to be prepared for. Although comprehensive air defence systems had been installed, there were vulnerabilities, including the possibility of a covert landing by Argentinian troops, with Stanley airfield as a likely target. There were no hardened shelters at RAF Stanley, the aircraft were under canvas and "vulnerable to a well-judged grenade".

Argentine intelligence aircraft were probing the perimeter of the British defended zone and amongst the scenarios being discussed was the possibility of a single opposing Hercules, or perhaps a single fighter, approaching the Falklands. Would the RAF shoot it down? Might it be carrying defectors and be allowed to land? Despite the Argentinian surrender in June 1982, the situation was an uncomfortable one.

Another of the Pucarás that can be seen in the UK today is A-522. One of thirty-five Pucarás on strength with the Argentine Air Force's *Grupo 3 de Ataque*, prior to the Falklands War, A-522 is believed to be one of twelve Pucarás sent to the islands on or around 15 May 1982, to replace aircraft that had been lost up to that point in the fighting. After the surrender, the aircraft was found at Stanley in a relatively undamaged state.

A-522's journey to the UK began on 6 September 1982, when it was airlifted by Chinook onto *Contender Bezant* which was anchored off Port William. Later the same day, the vessel sailed for the UK, arriving at Southampton Docks on the 23rd of that month. A-522 was offloaded and moved by road to RAF Abingdon where it was allocated the maintenance serial 8768M in anticipation of it joining the RAF Museum store at St. Athan.

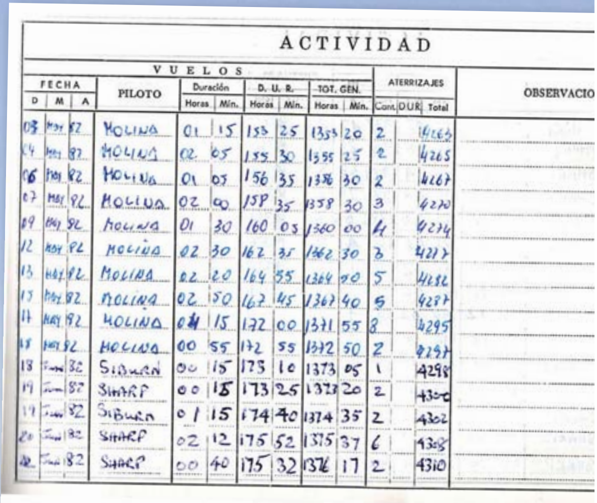
That eventuality never occurred and A-522 was moved to the Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton. During its time here a number of parts were removed from the aircraft to service another captured Pucará which was being flown by the A&AEE (probably A-515). Due to rationalisation of certain displays at the Fleet Air Arm Museum during 1994, the aircraft became available for loan and it was moved to the North East Aircraft Museum where it can be seen to this day. ■

ABOVE LEFT: **The FMA 1A 59 Pucará A-515, the subject of our profile drawings on the previous pages, on display at the RAF Museum at Cosford. It was on 9 September 1983, that this aircraft was flown from Boscombe Down (its last evaluation flight, a landing on grass, being undertaken on 25 July 1983) to Cosford.** (©The Trustees of the RAF Museum)

ABOVE RIGHT: **Huey AE-409 after its capture by the British.** (Courtesy of Tim Lynch)

RIGHT: **A page from Huey AE-409's original Argentine logbook, which is held by the Museum of Army Flying at Middle Wallop. It shows a seamless transition from entries in Spanish by Argentine airmen to the record kept by the pilots of 656 Squadron Army Air Corps. However, Major Sibun of 656 Squadron is incorrectly shown as "Siburn".** (Courtesy of the Museum of Army Flying)

BELOW: **On 1 May 1982, three Harriers of 800 Naval Air Squadron attacked the airstrip at Goose Green. One of the Argentine pilots, *Teniente* Jukic of *Grupo 3 de Ataque*, had been taxiing for take-off at the time. The aircraft took a direct hit from a cluster bomb dropped by one of the Sea Harriers, killing Jukic. His Pucará, the wreckage of which is shown here, was destroyed in the blast and two others were damaged beyond repair.** (Courtesy of Tony Dixon)



ACTIVIDAD

VUELOS										ATERRIZAJES			OBSERVACIO
FECHA			PILOTO	Duración		D. U. R.		TOT. GEN.					
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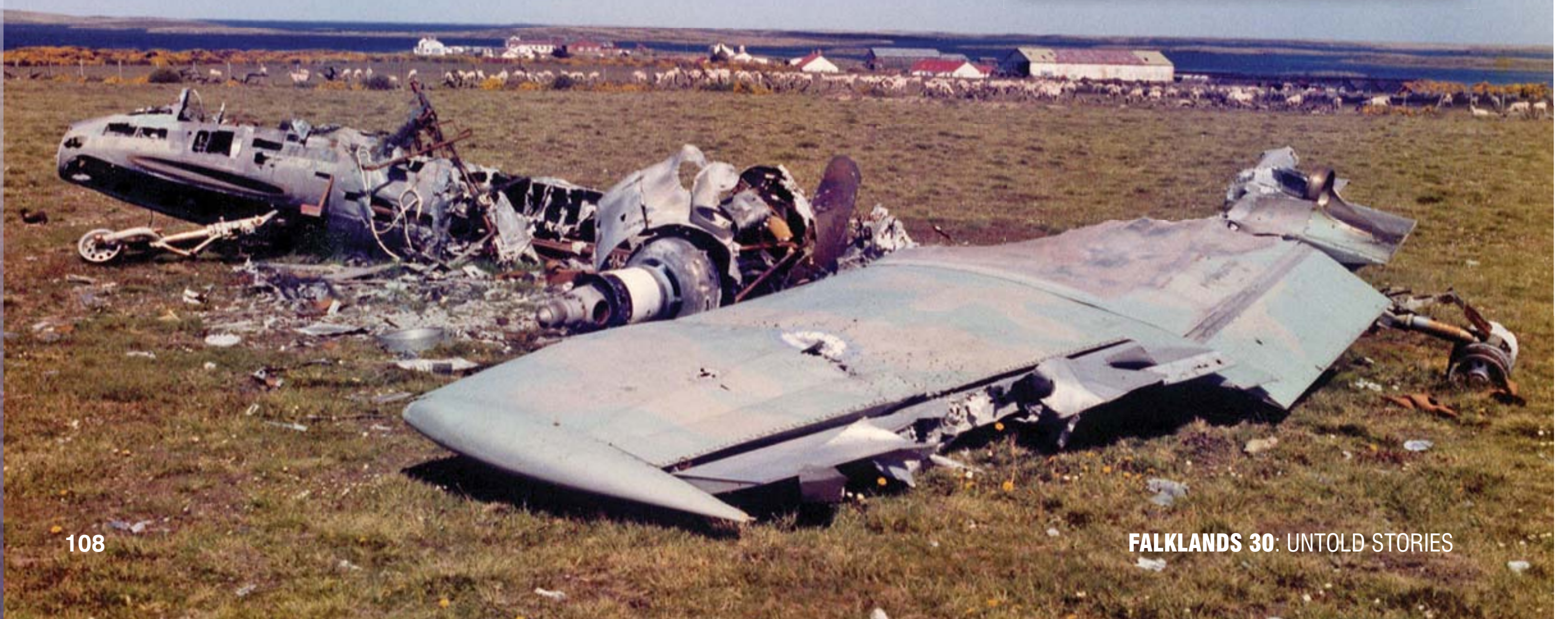
03	MAY	82	MOLINA	01	15	153	25	1353	20	2		4263	
04	MAY	82	MOLINA	02	05	155	30	1355	25	2		4265	
06	MAY	82	MOLINA	01	05	156	35	1356	30	2		4267	
07	MAY	82	MOLINA	02	00	158	35	1358	30	3		4270	
09	MAY	82	MOLINA	01	30	160	05	1360	00	4		4274	
12	MAY	82	MOLINA	02	30	162	35	1362	30	3		4277	
13	MAY	82	MOLINA	02	20	164	55	1364	50	5		4282	
15	MAY	82	MOLINA	02	50	167	45	1367	40	5		4287	
17	MAY	82	MOLINA	04	15	172	00	1371	55	8		4295	
18	MAY	82	MOLINA	00	55	172	55	1372	50	2		4297	
18	JUN	82	SIBURN	00	15	173	10	1373	05	1		4298	
19	JUN	82	SHARP	00	15	173	25	1373	20	2		4300	
19	JUN	82	SIBURN	01	15	174	40	1374	35	2		4302	
20	JUN	82	SHARP	02	12	175	52	1375	37	6		4308	
22	JUN	82	SHARP	00	40	175	32	1376	17	2		4310	

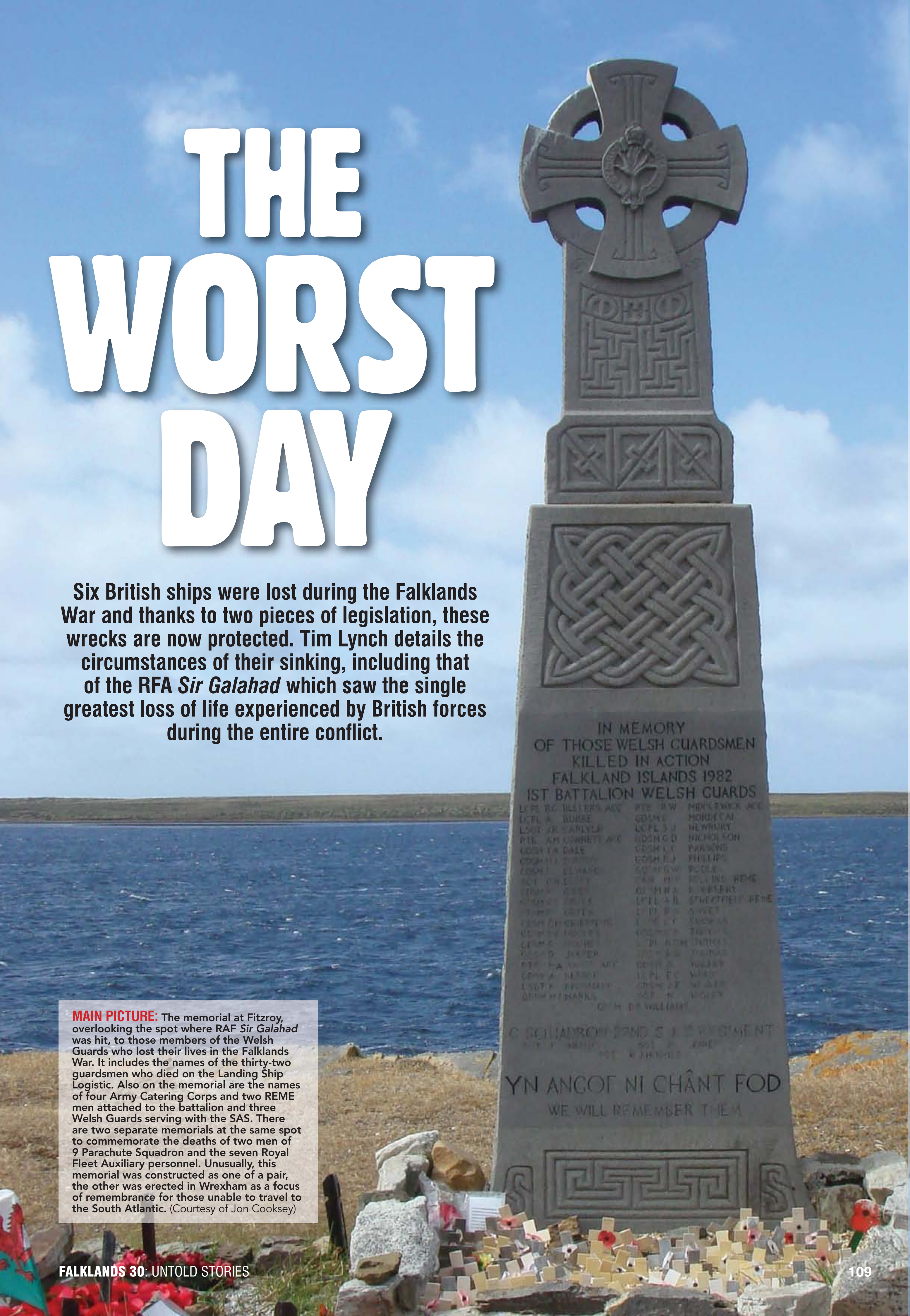
NOTE:

[1] Jeffrey Ethell and Alfred Price, *Air War South Atlantic* (Sidgwick & Jackson, London, 1983).



THE WORST DAY

Six British ships were lost during the Falklands War and thanks to two pieces of legislation, these wrecks are now protected. Tim Lynch details the circumstances of their sinking, including that of the RFA *Sir Galahad* which saw the single greatest loss of life experienced by British forces during the entire conflict.


IN MEMORY
OF THOSE WELSH GUARDSMEN
KILLED IN ACTION
FALKLAND ISLANDS 1982
1ST BATTALION WELSH GUARDS
YN ANGOF NI CHÂNT FOD
WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

MAIN PICTURE: The memorial at Fitzroy, overlooking the spot where RAF *Sir Galahad* was hit, to those members of the Welsh Guards who lost their lives in the Falklands War. It includes the names of the thirty-two guardsmen who died on the Landing Ship Logistic. Also on the memorial are the names of four Army Catering Corps and two REME men attached to the battalion and three Welsh Guards serving with the SAS. There are two separate memorials at the same spot to commemorate the deaths of two men of 9 Parachute Squadron and the seven Royal Fleet Auxiliary personnel. Unusually, this memorial was constructed as one of a pair, the other was erected in Wrexham as a focus of remembrance for those unable to travel to the South Atlantic. (Courtesy of Jon Cooksey)

On 7 July 1977, the Falklands Islands Government passed an ordinance that, similar to the United Kingdom's Protection of Wrecks Act, made provision for the protection of wrecks in colonial waters that are either of historical, archaeological or artistic importance, or are dangerous. On 20 October 1983, an order was passed under the ordinance that designated the areas around the wrecks of HMS *Ardent* and HMS *Antelope*, two of the ships lost in the 1982 conflict, as prohibited places.

The Type 21 Frigate HMS *Ardent* had been detailed to place herself in Falkland Sound in order to bombard the Argentine airstrip at Goose Green with her 4.5-inch gun in support of the landing of the British ground forces at San Carlos. This operation, codenamed *Sutton*, began on 21 May 1982.

At 16.00 hours GMT that day, an Argentine A-4 Skyhawk swept across the Sound. The jet dropped two bombs which straddled *Ardent*, but neither of them exploded. One hour and forty minutes later the Argentines attacked in force. Three aircraft crossed Falkland Sound from the west, attacking *Ardent*'s port side. Two bombs exploded in the hangar area, destroying the frigate's Lynx helicopter and blowing the Sea Cat launcher some eighty feet into the air before it crashed back down onto the flight deck. A third bomb smashed through the aft auxiliary machinery room but failed to explode. The aft switchboard was severely damaged, resulting in a partial loss of power.

ABOVE: **The track that runs through the settlement at Fitzroy. The wounded from *Sir Galahad* walked up this road to reach the field ambulance. The large building was 5 Infantry Brigade's temporary HQ when the LSLs *Sir Galahad* and *Sir Tristram* were hit in the bay behind.** (Courtesy of Tim Lynch)

BELOW: **HMS *Ardent* in San Carlos water after two Argentine air attacks. HMS *Yarmouth* can be seen on the left pulling away from *Ardent* after taking off her crew.** (Glenn Sands Collection)

HMS *Ardent* was instructed to move to San Carlos but at 18.00 hours GMT she was attacked again, this time by five Skyhawks. She was hit so many times that the exact number of bombs that fell on her has never been ascertained, though it may possibly be as many as ten. *Ardent*, on fire and listing badly, came to a halt in Grantham Sound. Commander Alan West ordered the ship to be abandoned. She sank at 06.30 hours the following morning, with only her mast remaining above the water. Twenty-two men were killed.

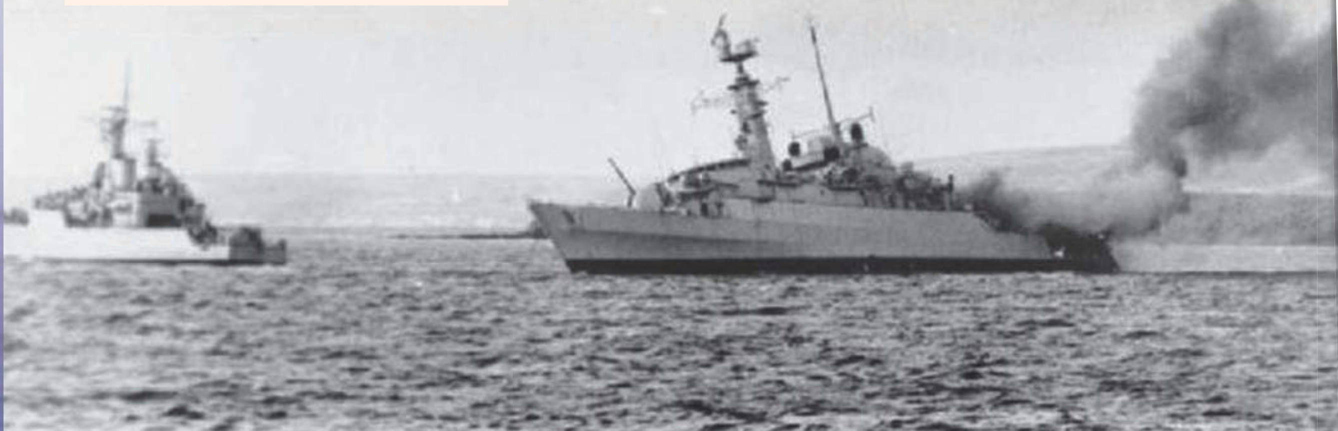
Two days later, on 23 May, while on air defence duty at the entrance to San Carlos Water, HMS *Antelope*, another Type 21 Frigate, came under attack by four Skyhawks. She was struck by two bombs, both of which failed to explode.

A team of Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) technicians from the Royal Engineers attempted to defuse the bombs but during that process one of them exploded, killing one of the two-man EOD team and severely injuring the other. The frigate was torn apart in the blast and Commander Nick Tobin gave the order to abandon ship. HMS *Antelope* sank the next day.

The list of ships protected by the Falklands ordinance was extended on 3 November 2006, when the area around the wreck of HMS *Coventry* was also designated a restricted site.

The Sheffield-class destroyer HMS *Coventry* had been stationed to the north-west of Falkland Sound when, on 25 May, she was attacked by four Skyhawks. Two bombs hit her just above the waterline on the port side. One of these breached a bulkhead between the forward and aft engine rooms, creating a large space into which water rushed from the hole in her side. Within twenty minutes *Coventry* had been abandoned. She capsized and sank shortly afterwards. Nineteen men were killed and thirty injured.

Three other ships were also sunk during the war, HMS *Sheffield*, RFA *Sir Galahad* and *Atlantic Conveyor*. These are also protected but they fall under the UK's Protection of Military Remains Act 1986. Under this piece of legislation it



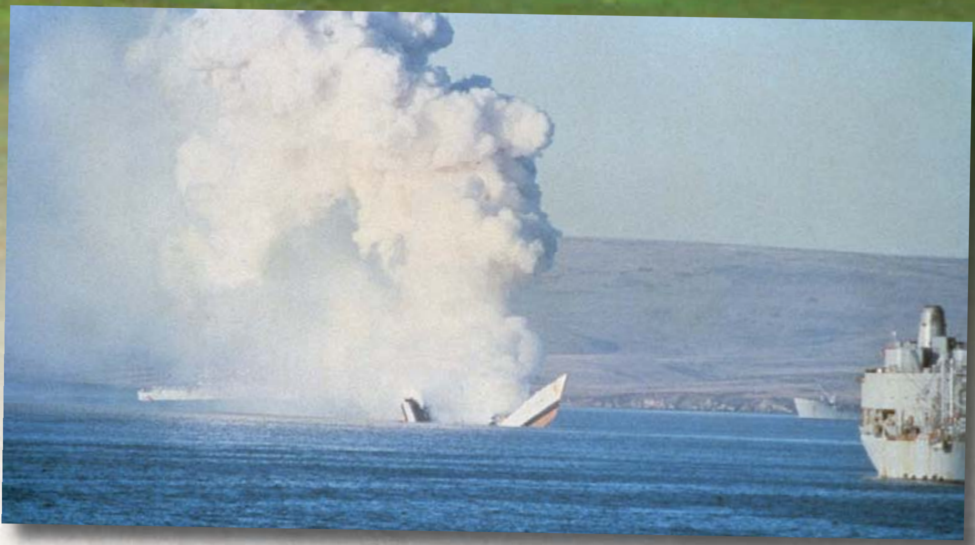
an offence to interfere with the wreckage of any crashed, sunken or stranded military aircraft or designated vessel without a licence. This is irrespective of loss of life or whether the loss occurred during peacetime or wartime.

HMS *Sheffield* was a Type 42 guided missile destroyer which, on the morning of 10 May 1982, was on defence duties when it was struck by an Exocet fired from a Super Étendard. Though the missile did not explode it caused a fire which soon overwhelmed the ship.

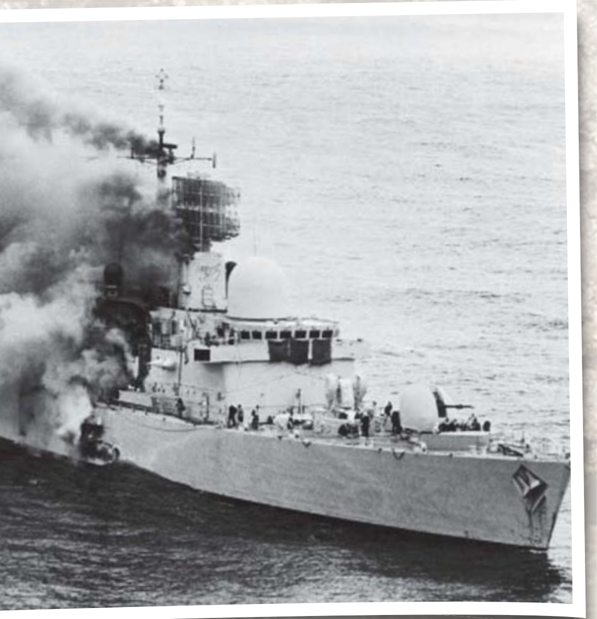
Twenty of her crew were killed and the rest rescued. She remained afloat and was taken in tow by HMS *Yarmouth* but in heavy seas water flooded through the hole in her side and she soon sank.

On the same day that HMS *Coventry* was sunk, SS *Atlantic Conveyor* was hit by two Exocet missiles. One of the missiles penetrated the hull of the ship where trucks and fuel were stored. The resulting fire gutted the ship and she was abandoned. When, five days later, the ship was re-boarded, it was obvious she could never be used again. The decision was made to sink her. Twelve men had died in the Exocet attack.

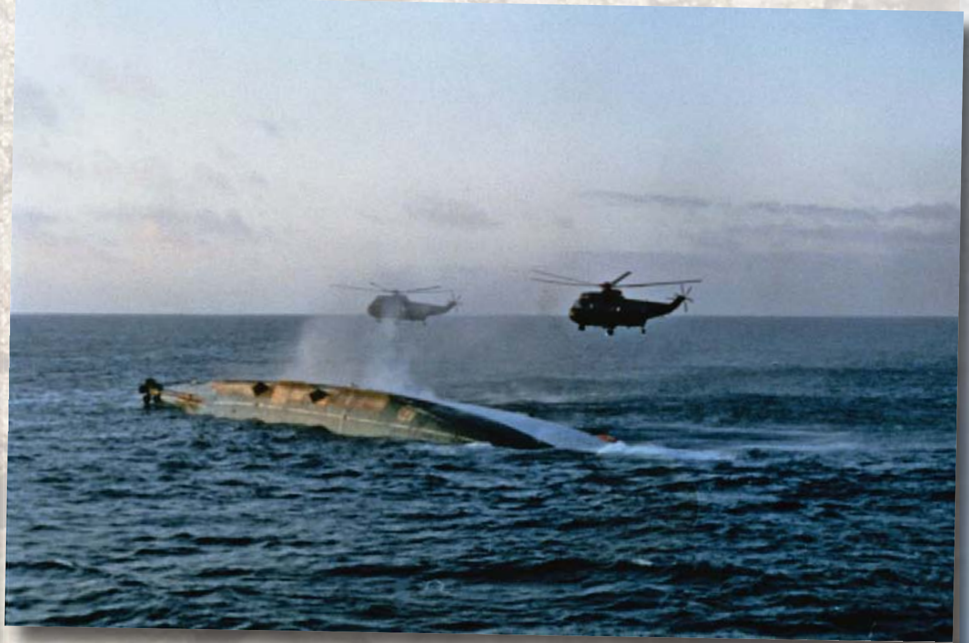
On 8 June two Landing Ship Logistics, RFA *Sir Tristram* and RFA *Sir Galahad* had prepared to discharge men from the Welsh Guards in Port Pleasant, off Fitzroy. The landing strip at San Carlos was temporarily out of action following a Harrier crash and the Rapier missiles of 12 Air Defence Battery were not yet



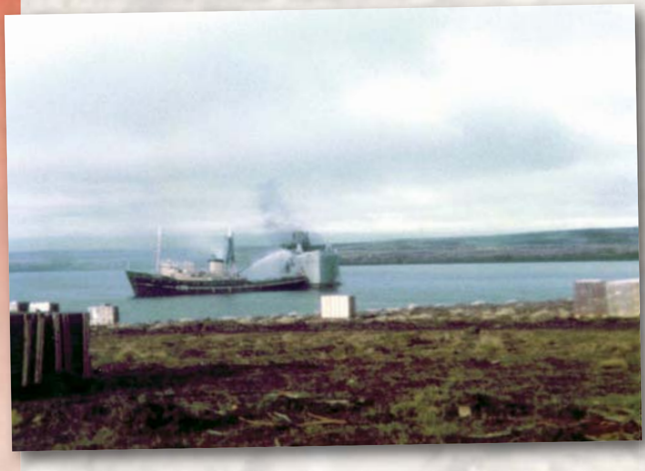
RIGHT: The aftermath of the explosion of the second Argentine 1,000-lb bomb on board HMS *Antelope*, when the war ship broke its back causing it to sink. A bomb disposal officer had been attempting to defuze the bomb at the time. (Imperial War Museum, FKD1241)

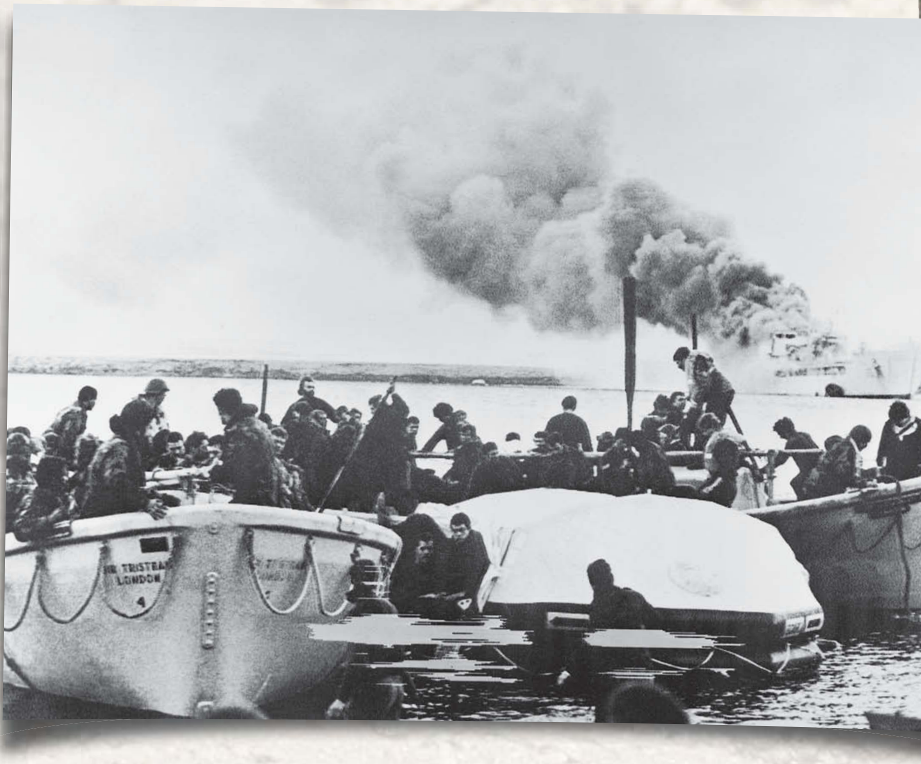


BELOW LEFT: The Type 42 destroyer HMS *Sheffield* on fire after being struck by an AM.39 Exocet missile fired from an Argentine aircraft from a distance of six miles. (Glenn Sands Collection)



BELOW RIGHT: Two Sea King 4 helicopters of 846 Naval Air Squadron, Fleet Air Arm hover over the upturned hull of HMS *Coventry* whilst searching for survivors. (Imperial War Museum, FKD1274)





ready. This meant that there was little air defence for the two ships – the stage was set for the biggest disaster to befall the British forces during the Falklands War.

Watching from the hills above Stanley, Argentine spotters watched the arrival of the LSLs with surprise and reported an ideal target – two ships in an open bay with no defences. *Fuerza Aérea Argentina*'s *Grupo* 5, equipped with A-4P Skyhawks, was briefed to make ready with two flights of four Skyhawks each loaded with three 500lb bombs.

Dogo Flight took off first, followed by *Mastin* Flight a few minutes later. As the Skyhawks took off, six Mirage 5 Daggers of the 5th and 6th Argentine Fighter Groups were loaded with 1,000lb contact bombs and prepared to join them. Four Mirages of the 8th Fighter Group were tasked to simulate a low level incursion along the north coast of the islands and then turn away, acting as a decoy for the British Sea Harrier Combat Air Patrol, but problems began almost immediately.

One of the Daggers suffered a bird strike on its canopy and had to make an emergency landing. Then, halfway to the islands, the Skyhawks rendezvoused with two KC130 tankers for refuelling but as *Dogo* Flight began its approach, one aircraft developed an oil pressure problem and had to turn back. At this point two others found their fuel nozzles frozen and they, too, turned back, leaving the inexperienced *Primer Teniente* Carlos Cachón as the flight commander for the remaining five aircraft.

As Cachón's group flew on through worsening weather, the Daggers of *Grupo* 6, under the command of *Capitán* Carlos Rohde, followed their flight plan. The decoy flight had worked perfectly and now Rohde's group would fly in and attack Port Pleasant from the west as the Skyhawks went north of the settlement and then came in from the east.

Unknown to them, however, HMS *Plymouth* had been tasked to shell an Argentine position on West Falkland in support of SAS operations and was in the Sound when the Daggers appeared. Realising he had lost the element of surprise, Rohde decided to attack the *Plymouth* immediately. Four bombs passed through the ship without exploding although one bounced through the ship's depth charge stowage, triggering a partial explosion. More damage was done by the aircraft's cannons with twenty to thirty hits reported before the Daggers broke off their attack and headed for home.

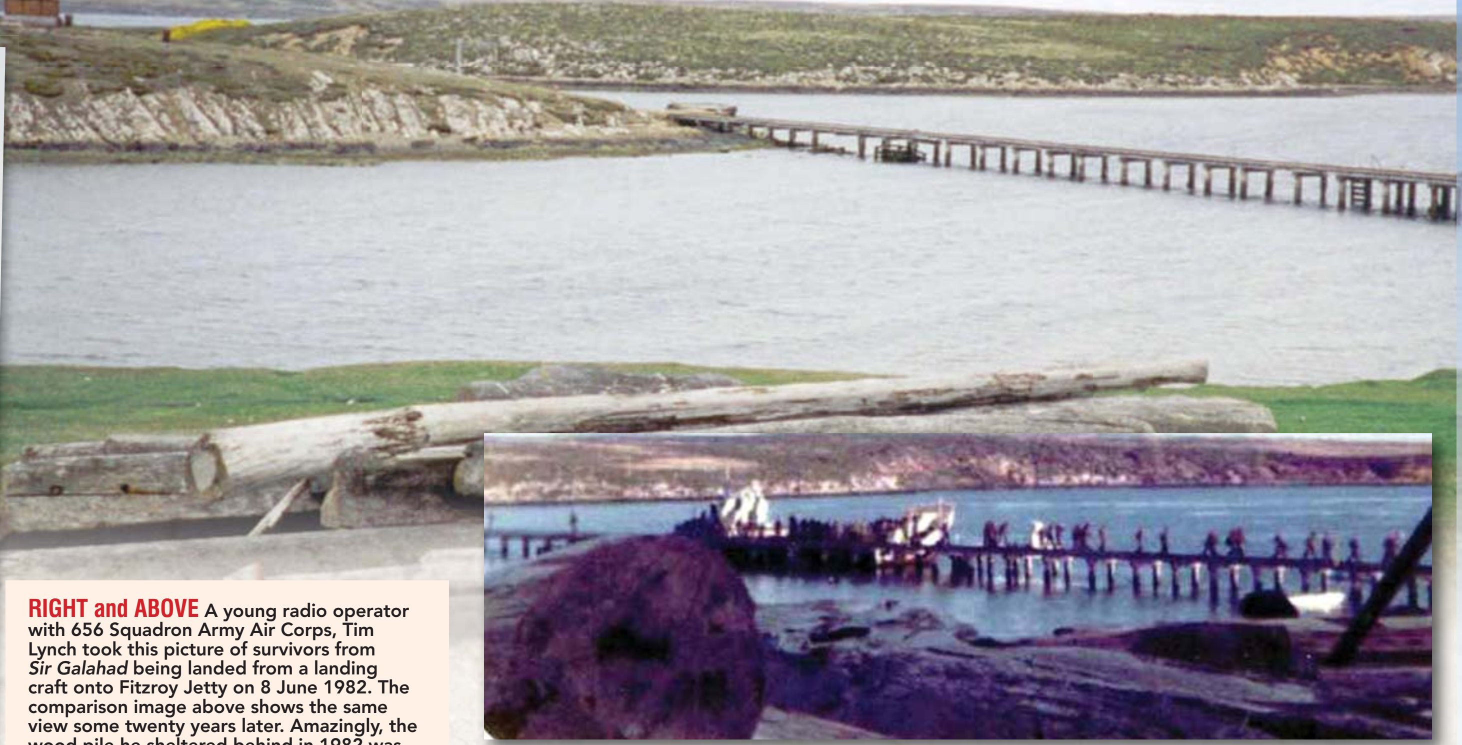
Meanwhile, Cachón's group followed its plan, narrowly avoiding hitting a Scout helicopter which was forced down into a large pond as they swept inland and around the settlement of Fitzroy. Sweeping in low across the sea at 560 mph, 28-year-old Carlos Cachón recalled the briefing before take-off: "Attack at one minute intervals, three aircraft ahead and two behind … Take them to glory!"

Now, as tracer rounds reached out towards him, he heard an excited call from his wingman: "They are there, to the right, one either side of the peninsula." Suddenly, up ahead, Cachón could make out two grey shapes near the coast and he turned towards them. Seconds later, just as the ships' alarms began to sound,

ABOVE LEFT: A still smouldering *Sir Galahad* pictured from the shore in the days after the Argentine attack. (Courtesy of Tim Lynch)

ABOVE RIGHT: Lifeboats carrying members of *Sir Galahad*'s crew and soldiers of 1st Battalion Welsh Guards reach shore at Fitzroy, having escaped from the blazing Landing Ship Logistics after the devastating Argentine air raid on 8 June 1982. (Imperial War Museum, FKD2126)

LEFT: The sight of Argentine aircraft, flying low and fast over the water, such as this image of what appears to be an A-4 Skyhawk pictured over San Carlos Water on 24 May 1982, would become all too familiar to the personnel of the Task Force.



RIGHT and ABOVE **A young radio operator with 656 Squadron Army Air Corps, Tim Lynch took this picture of survivors from *Sir Galahad* being landed from a landing craft onto Fitzroy Jetty on 8 June 1982. The comparison image above shows the same view some twenty years later. Amazingly, the wood pile he sheltered behind in 1982 was still there.** (Both courtesy of Tim Lynch)

the Skyhawk's 500lb bombs struck the rear of the first British ship, igniting fuel tanks stored on deck.

Cachón had scored a direct hit, but behind him Pilot Officers Gomez and Carmona had both missed, whilst *Teniente* Rinke had been distracted by a call from Carmona and had failed to drop his bombs. Only *Teniente* Galvez had also hit the target, a stick of bombs falling across *Sir Tristram*, though only one exploded. Racing away, the Skyhawks left chaos behind them.

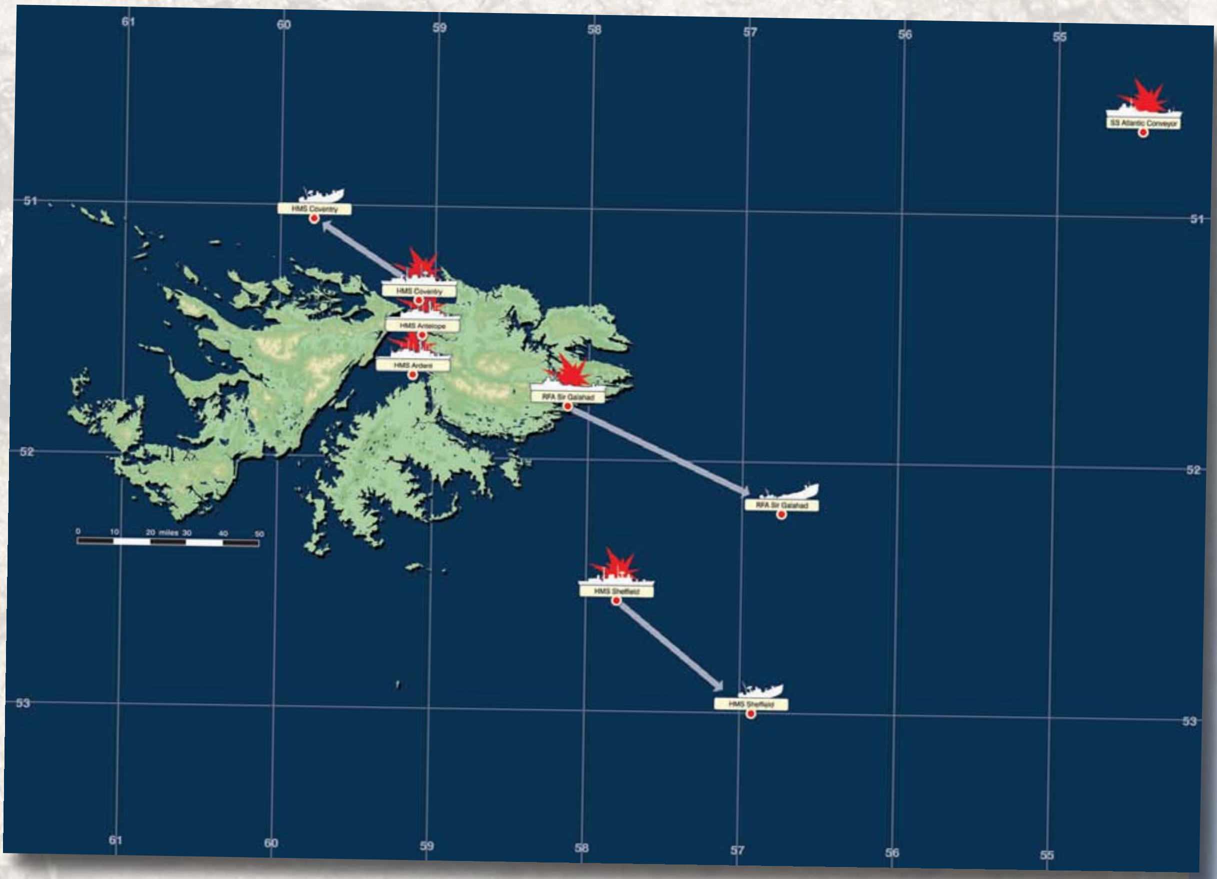
Despite the failure of most of the Argentine munitions to function, the bombs dropped by Cachón had a devastating effect. "There was this rather dull, all embracing crack, a terrifically enveloping thud, and a huge flame overhead, where all these people had been sitting," recalled Captain Hilarion Roberts of 1st Battalion, Welsh Guards. In what felt like slow motion, Captain Roberts felt the heat wash over him and watched as his hands melted before his eyes.

Ashore, the blast wave felt like the slamming of a huge door and the heat of the resulting fireball could be felt by the helpless observers in Fitzroy itself. For Gunner Tony McNally, a Rapier operator with 12 Air Defence Troop, the shock of the attack was made worse by the failure of his Rapier missile system to function at the crucial moment.

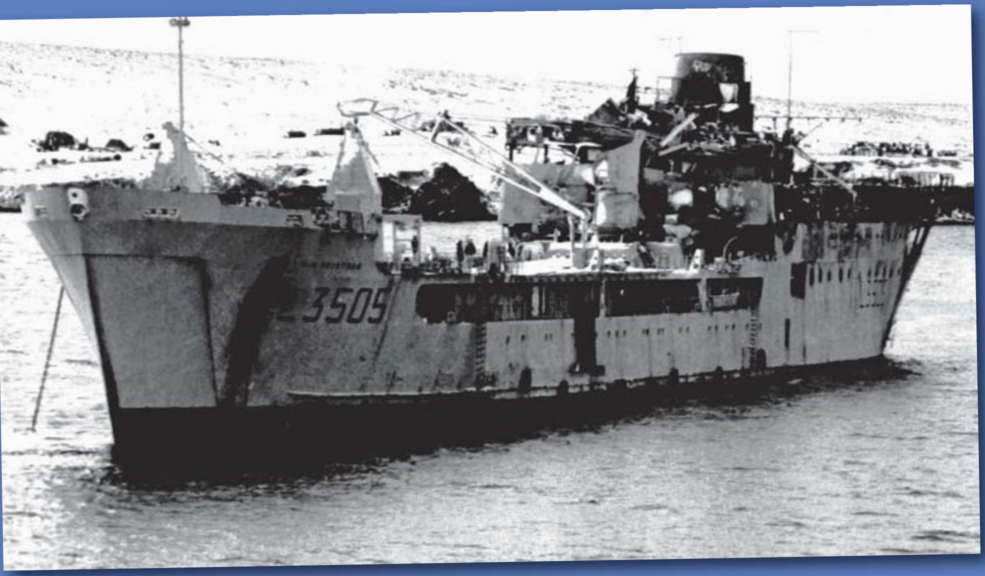
Angry soldiers rounded on the artillerymen who had been powerless to intervene. Everyone who could made their way to the beach to assist in the rescue. Fortunately, earlier in the day the medics of 16 Field Ambulance had been able to unload their stores and were soon tending to the wounded as they made their way ashore. Those medics still aboard *Sir Galahad* set up an emergency station on the ship's forecastle to stabilise the injured so they could be winched aboard the Sea King helicopters that hovered in the dense smoke.

Below deck, the fires raged. The wet weather clothing supplied to the troops melted and stuck to their skin, causing still more burns as men tried to rip the burning plastic off. Guardsman David Grimshaw, his leg gone, watched in horror as a man staggered past, ablaze from head to toe. As a machine-gunner, Grimshaw became horribly aware that he had something like 1,000 rounds of ammunition on him and quickly stripped off his webbing, before the rounds started to explode, and began to crawl for the exit.

Sergeant Pete Naya of 16 Field Ambulance looked in vain for his colleagues before setting to work at an impromptu aid station, using smashed crates and pallets to provide splints and field dressings brought to him by uninjured men. Where men had grabbed rails to steady themselves, their hands had "degloved", bunching the palms and fingers so that Naya had to cut the



BELOW RIGHT: **A map showing the location where the six ships were attacked and, if different, where they sank.** (Dave Cassan Artwork)



fingers apart without painkillers. Those with the most serious hand injuries could do nothing to douse the burning plastic cutting into their skin.

Yet, despite the horror, there was no panic. Injured men made way for those with more serious wounds. Lance Corporal Dale Loveridge was awarded the Military Medal for returning time and again to collect the wounded and escort them to the lifeboats; many others followed suit. There was even humour, such as when Company Sergeant Major Brian Neck called one man back from a queue waiting to climb a ladder to safety. "Did you fill out your ADAT [Army Dependents Association Trust – nominating the recipient of grants payable in the event of being killed in action]?" "Yes sir", said the man. "Good", said Neck, "now you see the bloody point of it. Go on, get a move on, you're holding everyone up." It was a brilliantly calculated comment that relieved the tension of the moment and for his behaviour that day in ensuring the safety of his men, Neck was also awarded the Military Medal.

As the wounded reached shore they were met by the Paras, guardsmen and other troops of 5 Brigade and taken up a muddy track to Fitzroy's village hall where the medics of 16 Field Ambulance had set up a triage system. Lines of men stood outside, their hands wrapped in plastic bags to guard against infection, holding them in the air to allow the wind to cool the burns. Islanders brought blankets, made tea and tried to help however they could. The Rapier crews tore the plastic sheeting from some of their as yet unpacked weapons, using this to wrap the burns of those coming ashore.

The smell of burnt flesh pervaded the air and, from time to time, men would quietly turn away and vomit as the shock set in. Helicopters converged on the scene to ferry the seriously wounded back to the medical facility at Ajax Bay or directly out to ships. Consequently, it was some time before the final toll could be counted. Two Chinese sailors died aboard *Sir Tristram* but on the *Sir Galahad* the fires killed forty-eight men, thirty-two of them guardsmen. It was a devastating blow to the Task Force.

As 2 Para's medical officer, Steve Hughes, help tend to the wounded in Fitzroy's village hall, a young guardsman asked permission to smoke. Surrounded by men suffering horrific burns, Hughes could think of only one answer – "you've only just stopped haven't you?" Then he lit the cigarette held in the man's blistered fingers.

In the years that followed, the survivors of *Sir Galahad* struggled to come to terms with their wounds. The most famous veteran of the disaster, Simon Weston, underwent years of painful surgery to try to rectify the worst of the damage done to him and, although he remains disfigured, he has been able to turn his struggle into something positive, creating a charity to inspire others. He has even met with Carlos Cachón, the man who caused all that pain, and the two men remain in contact. Both agree there was nothing personal about the attack.

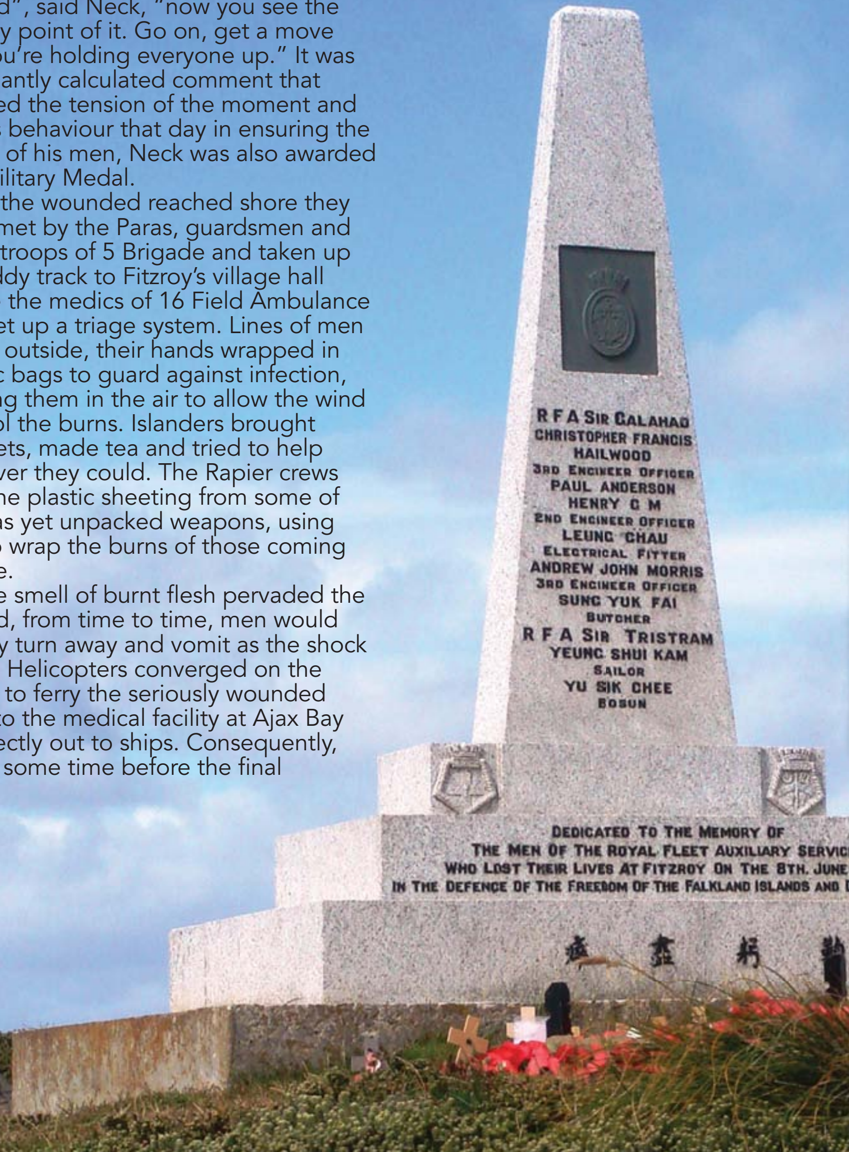
For others though, the aftermath has not yet achieved such a sense of closure. Teenagers who saw their friends literally melt away have often battled to come to terms with their experiences. Tony McNally's helplessness as his Rapier failed to fire caused him guilt for years afterwards. For everyone involved, the day will never be forgotten.

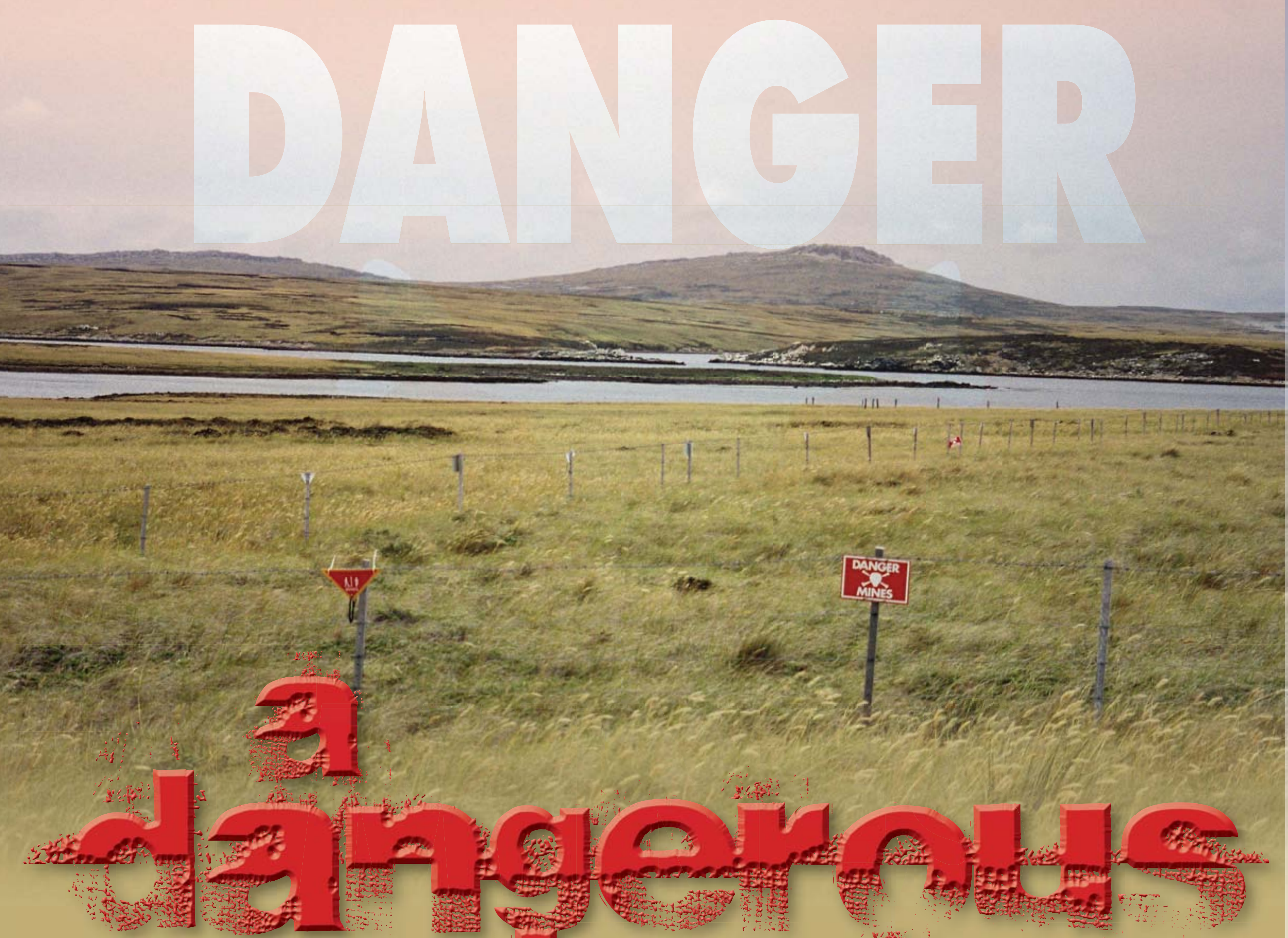
Recalling the conflict many years later, *Teniente* Hector Sanchez, the sole survivor of the second wave of *Grupo* 5, put it simply: "This day was the darkest day for the British Task Force, and, at the same time, it was the worst day of my life, too."

ABOVE LEFT: **The badly-damaged RFA *Sir Tristram* pictured after the Argentine attacks at Fitzroy Cove on 8 June 1982, attacks that sealed the fate of RFA *Sir Galahad*. At approximately 14:00 local time the decks of *Sir Tristram* were strafed and two members of the crew were killed. A 500 lb bomb penetrated the deck but failed to explode immediately, allowing the remaining crew to be evacuated. Following the later explosion, *Sir Tristram* was abandoned.**

BELOW: **A weather-beaten relic of the attack on RFA *Sir Galahad*. This lifebelt was found resting behind a hut in Fitzroy settlement in 2002. Its present whereabouts is unknown, though it is believed to be in the UK.** (Courtesy of Tim Lynch)

BOTTOM: **The memorial to those members of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary who lost their lives in Fitzroy Cove on 8 June 1982.** (Courtesy of Jon Cooksey)





a dangerous legacy

Though the fighting on the Falkland Islands has long since ended, writes Martin Mace, a number of physical reminders of the events of 1982 still remain, the most lethal of which are the many minefields scattered across the islands.

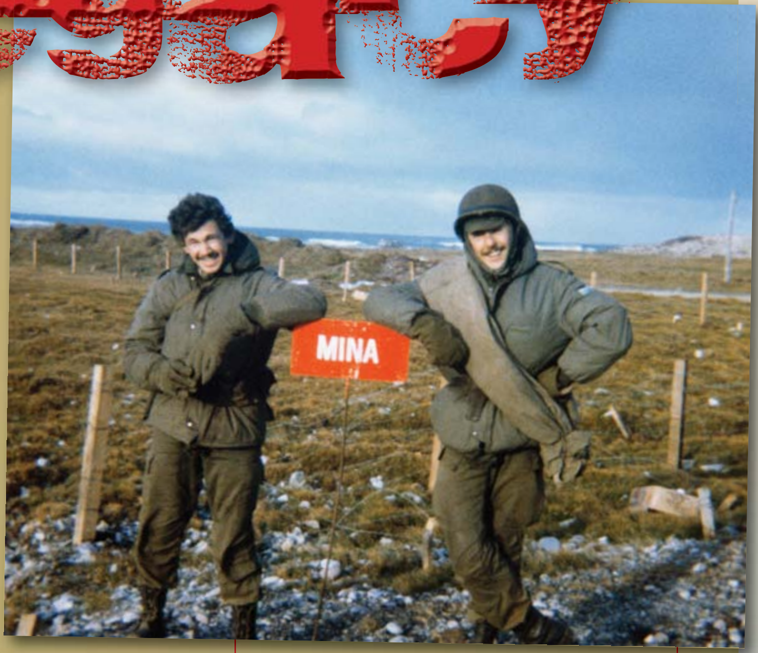
DANGER
MINES

By the time they had surrendered, Argentine personnel had laid 113 minefields on the islands, along with which there were four "suspect hazardous areas". The minefields were dispersed over a total area of twenty square miles, mainly in the vicinities of Port Stanley, Port Howard, Fox Bay and Goose Green.

About eighty percent of these mines were laid in the islands' sandy beaches and peat bogs, which can shift a mine's position and make detection and removal extremely difficult. Despite this knowledge, in the immediate aftermath of the war, British Forces cleared over 1,000 anti-personnel, eighty anti-vehicle mines and 1,000 booby traps in thirty of the minefields.

Under the Ottawa Convention the United Kingdom is obliged to clear the Falklands of anti-personnel mines by 2019. In 2009/10, four mined areas at Fox Bay, Goose Green, Surf Bay and at Sapper Hill were cleared, during which work a total of 1,246 mines were removed (a number that consisted of 678 anti-personnel and 568 anti-vehicle mines).

A representative of the Falkland Islands Government stated: "Whilst supporting HMG's commitment to the Ottawa Treaty, the Falkland Islands Government stress that the mine clearance is not happening at their behest and we recognize that there are other areas in the world that are in much more urgent need of clearance. All mined areas are well marked and to date there have been no civilian casualties caused by mines. There are regular



TOP: The minefield at Port William near Stanley on East Falkland.

ABOVE: Confiscated by 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines Intelligence Section, this picture shows two Argentine soldiers from 25 Infantry Regiment posing by a warning sign in front of a minefield in the Yorke Bay area. This unit was responsible for the Argentine ground defence of the airfield sector. (IWM FKD2938)

DANGER
MINES

briefings given to the schools by the EOD detachment in the islands."

Visitors and residents are warned that "entering a minefield, attempting to detonate mines, damaging minefield fences, taking away minefield signs and driving animals into minefields" are all criminal offences that may result in a fine of up to £1,000 or a twelve-month prison sentence. One UN report states that nine types of landmine were used during the war; five different anti-tank mines (of Israeli, Italian, Argentine, Spanish and US manufacture), and four anti-personnel (again of Israeli, Italian, Argentine and Spanish origin).

As of January 2012, some eighty-three minefields and suspect hazardous areas remain in the Falkland Islands. Over 12,300 anti-personnel and 3,300 anti-vehicle Argentine-laid mines have yet to be dealt with, though another phase of work, which will clear an area of land on Stanley Common, is scheduled to begin in 2012. Of the British-laid mines, confined to five anti-personnel minefields around the then RAF Stanley, "they were lifted immediately after the cessation of hostilities", though "one Elsie C3 anti-personnel mine is unaccounted for".

The military historian Jon Cooksey visited the Falkland Islands on three occasions in 2007 and 2008, and he vividly recalls encountering one of the minefields on his first trip:

"I stayed at the homely Darwin Lodge with Ken and Bonnie Greenland and one afternoon I decided I would walk north, over the causeway which crosses the neck of Darwin Pond and head towards Burnside House – always called 'Burntside' in studies of the Battle of Darwin/Goose Green – almost to the 'start line' for 'A' Company of 2 Para.

"I had been walking for perhaps thirty to forty minutes across the thick, snagging, buff-coloured grass when I came across a double-layered fence and a red sign – 'DANGER MINES' – with the tell-tale skull and crossbones symbol. Another red, triangular sign displayed two figures – one being blown up and the other with a missing leg!

"This did not auger well. Although I had been told that all minefields in the Falklands had been well marked and that there had never been a human post-war casualty, this was the first minefield I had ever come across. Quite alone on the open expanse of ground I froze.

"What if all the minefields had not been marked correctly? What if one, or several, of the Spanish-manufactured EXPAL anti-personnel blast mines or worse, the even larger 25kg anti-tank mines which it was known the Argentines had laid, had somehow 'moved' and lay undetected just outside the fenced area? And, if they did, what if my next step – in any direction – put my foot directly on top of one of them? It had, after all, been anti-personnel mines which had seriously injured two men of 3 Para – Corporal Brian Milne, a section commander of 4 Platoon of 'B' Company, and Lance Corporal Bassey who had stepped on another as he had jumped out of his Volvo Bandwagon vehicle as he had come up to evacuate Brian Milne.

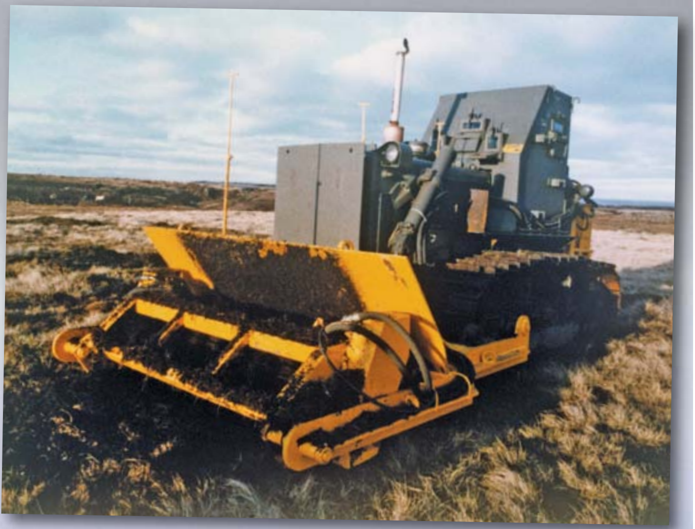
"It was an irrational fear I knew, but for several minutes I was paralysed; I simply could not move. I knew I couldn't stay there forever. Come on – get a grip man!

"There was nothing for it but to walk on so at last, summoning up the courage to trust the mine maps, I strode out – a huge, purposeful 'it's all going to be fine' kind of step. My foot hit the ground. Nothing. Relief! With the fear now broken I kept striding, striding until I had put some distance between myself and the leering skulls and crossbones, but my experience had been a salutary brush with the continued legacy of the Falklands War." ■

ABOVE LEFT: One of the many warning signs that litter the Falkland Islands' countryside. (Courtesy of Tim Lynch)

BELOW: Following the surrender and repatriation of Argentine forces, between August and October 1982 the Royal Engineers used this armoured D6 tractor fitted with a flail to clear mines laid on the Falklands. During three decades of clearance work, it is stated that some 2.8 million items of ordnance from bullets, flares, mines and grenades to rockets, mortar shells and 1,000lb bombs, have been recovered on the islands. (IWM FKD2638)

BOTTOM: A section of the fence surrounding one of the minefields near Darwin. (Courtesy of Jon Cooksey)



THE FATE OF THE TASK FORCE

It is well-known that Operation *Corporate* saved a number Royal Navy ships from being decommissioned but what is less well-known is what eventually happened to the ships that survived the Falklands conflict after the war. Robert Cager explores the fate of these vessels, and those of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary that served alongside them.

HMS *Hermes*

Centaur-class Aircraft Carrier (Flagship)

The last of the post-war conventional aircraft carriers commissioned into the Royal Navy, *Hermes* was due to be decommissioned in 1982 but because of the Falklands crisis her service life was extended until 12 April 1984, finally being decommissioned in 1985. In April 1986 *Hermes* was refitted and sold to India, being re-commissioned as the INS *Viraat* in 1989. Still in service.

HMS *Invincible*

Invincible-class Aircraft Carrier

In February 1982 it was announced that *Invincible* would be sold to Australia (for £175 million), but following the outbreak of hostilities, the Australian Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser, informed the British Government that the sale could be cancelled if desired. In July 1982 the MoD announced that it had withdrawn its offer to sell *Invincible* and she remained in service with the Royal Navy until 19 August 2005, when she was finally placed on the Navy's reserve list. She was eventually decommissioned in December 2010, being towed from Portsmouth to Leyal Ship Recycling's yard at Aliaga in Turkey, where she was broken up.

HMS *Fearless*

Landing Platform Dock

HMS *Fearless* continued in service with the Royal Navy until 17 December 2007. She was then towed to Ghent in Belgium to be broken up.

ABOVE: **Indian Navy Sea Harriers and Indian Air Force SEPECAR Jaguars with a US Navy Super Hornet fly past INS *Viraat*, 7 September 2007.** (US Navy)

BELOW: **HMS *Invincible* is slowly dismantled at a Turkish breaker's yard.** (Barcroft Media)

LEFT: RFA *Tidepool* inside the Total Exclusion Zone, May 1982.

BELOW: HMS *Andromeda* pictured alongside SS *Canberra*, the "Great White Whale", near Stanley at the end of the Falklands War.

HMS *Intrepid*

Landing Platform Dock

Having served with the Royal Navy until she was decommissioned on 12 February 2007, HMS *Intrepid* was then recycled at a British facility in Liverpool.

HMS *Bristol*

Type 82 Destroyer

After the re-capture of the Falklands, HMS *Bristol*, the only vessel of her class to be built for the Royal Navy, continued on station for a period of time as flagship of the remaining Royal Navy forces. Upon her return to the UK she was extensively re-fitted and re-armed. In 1987 she became a training ship and is now moored at the tip of Whale Island in Portsmouth Harbour. Hosting up to 17,000 visitors, including Sea Cadets, annually for fifty weeks a year, she provides the closest thing to a sea-going experience without leaving port.

HMS *Glasgow*

Type 42 Destroyer

HMS *Glasgow* remained with the Royal Navy until she was decommissioned on 1 February 2005, following the *Delivering Security in a Changing World* review. Amongst her other deployments, *Glasgow* had been sent to East Timor as part of the Australian-led INTERFET peacekeeping taskforce from 19 to 29 September 1999. In early 2004, the ship was involved in the Atlantic Patrol Task (South) which is a standing Royal Navy deployment that ensures there is always a British presence in the South Atlantic and off West Africa. This consists of a single warship accompanied by a single Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessel. On 7 January 2009, *Glasgow* was towed to Turkey and dismantled.

HMS *Exeter*

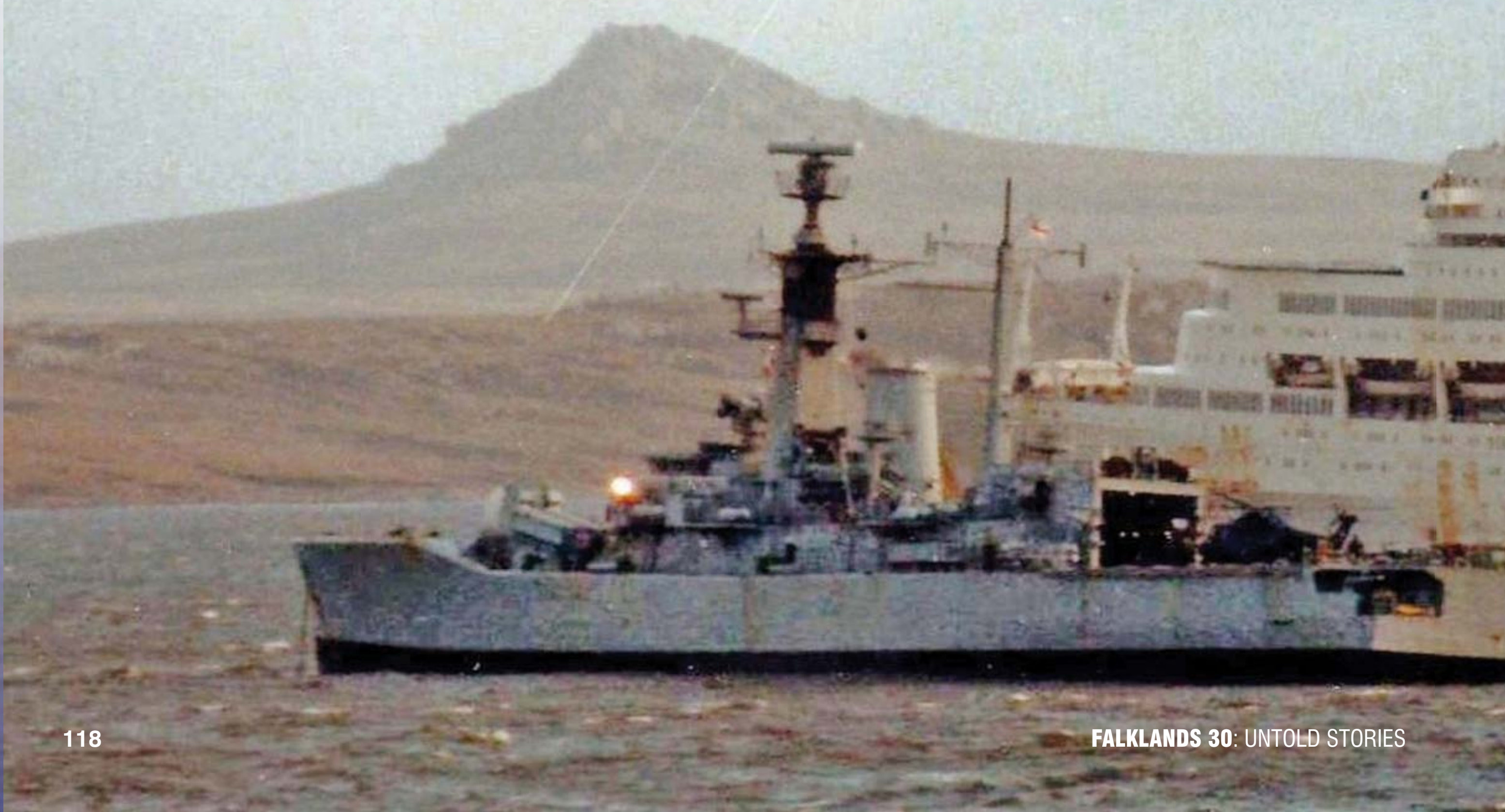
Type 42 Destroyer

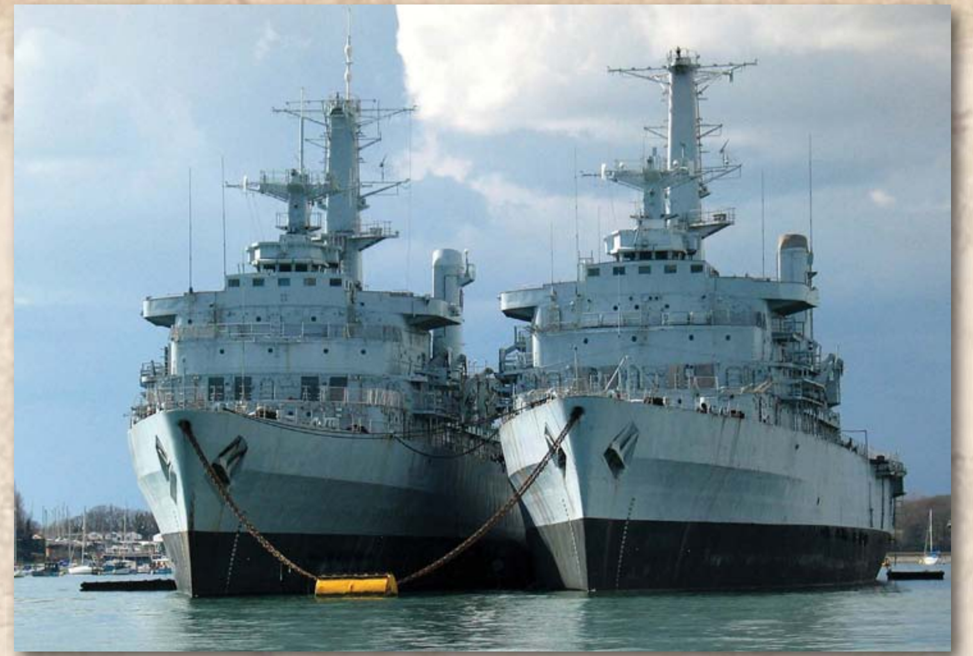
HMS *Exeter*'s most significant deployment after the Falklands was in the 1991 Gulf War when she helped provide air defence for the US battleships bombarding Iraqi positions. On 30 July 2008, *Exeter* was placed in a state of "Extended Readiness" at Portsmouth before being finally decommissioned on 27 May 2009. In early 2010, *Exeter* was in use as a training hulk to assist with the training of new naval base tug crews. She was sold at auction on 28 March 2011, and finally towed away to be scrapped at the Leyal yard in Turkey on 23 September 2011.

HMS *Cardiff*

Type 42 Destroyer

HMS *Cardiff* served with the Royal Navy until she was decommissioned on 14 July 2005. She took part in the Gulf War, her Lynx helicopters conducting some 600 sorties which included the sinking of two Iraqi minesweepers off Qaruh Island. After the Gulf War, *Cardiff*'s assignments included a deployment with the Standing Naval Force Mediterranean, which is a multi-national NATO force that is always available for rapid crisis response. In 1994 she was part of the UK's contribution to Operation *Vigilant Warrior* which helped deter Saddam Hussein from risking another invasion of Kuwait. After decommissioning, she was kept at Portsmouth where she was cannibalised for parts to keep other Type 42 destroyers operating. On 21 November 2008, she left Portsmouth for Turkey for dismantling.





HMS *Antrim*

County-class Destroyer

As part of her relationship with County Antrim, this destroyer carried a piece of the Giant's Causeway mounted in the ship's main passageway, appropriately also named the Giant's Causeway. HMS *Antrim* was decommissioned in 1984 and like her sister ship, *Glamorgan*, sold to the Chilean Navy, becoming *Almirante Cochrane*. She was finally decommissioned on 7 December 2006, and on 11 December 2010 she was towed to China to be broken-up for scrap.

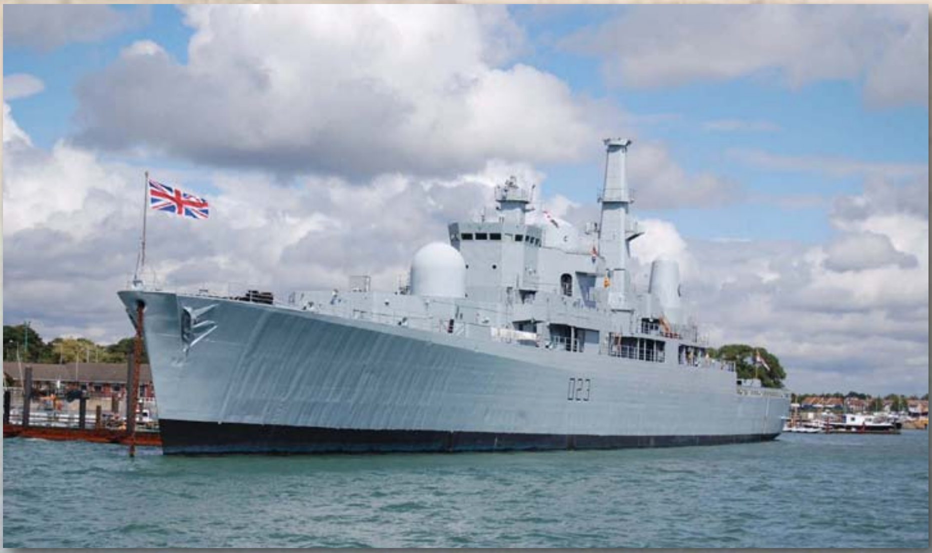
LEFT: The Amphibious Assault Ships *Intrepid* and *Fearless* pictured at Portsmouth awaiting disposal. At the time of the Argentine invasion, HMS *Intrepid* had actually paid off its crew, but was hurriedly re-commissioned and sailed some three weeks after her sister ship. (Courtesy of Tim Aldworth)

BELOW: HMS *Bristol* pictured alongside Whale Island, HMS *Excellent*, in Portsmouth Dockyard.

HMS *Glamorgan*

County-class Destroyer

After the Falklands War, HMS *Glamorgan* was extensively re-fitted. She was deployed off the coast of Lebanon in 1984 as part of the multi-national force engaged in peacekeeping duties. She was decommissioned in 1986 and finally sold to the Chilean Navy, at the same time being renamed *Almirante Latorre*. She served with the Chileans for twelve years until she was decommissioned again in 1998. On 11 April 2005, she sank while under tow to be broken up.



HMS *Brilliant*

Type 22 Frigate

On 31 August 1996, HMS *Brilliant* was sold to the Brazilian Navy and renamed *Dodsworth*. Before that, in 1990, she had become the first Royal Navy warship to have members of the Women's Royal Naval Service serving on board.

HMS *Broadsword*

Type 22 Frigate

Before being decommissioned in 1995, HMS *Broadsword* was involved in Operation *Grapple* in the Adriatic Sea in support of British forces operating in Bosnia with the United Nations Protection Force. She was sold to the Brazilian Navy on 30 June 1995, and renamed *Greenhalgh*. She is still in service.

HMS *Active*

Type 21 Frigate

After the Falklands, HMS *Active* had to have steel plating welded along her sides because of a design flaw which saw cracking of the hull. She was sold to the Pakistan Navy in 1994 and renamed PNS *Shah Jehan*. She is still in service.

HMS *Alacrity*

Type 21 Frigate

Alacrity suffered from the same problems with her hull as her sister ship HMS *Active*. She was also decommissioned and transferred to Pakistan on 1 March 1994, being renamed PNS *Badr*. She also remains in service.

HMS *Ambuscade*

Type 21 Frigate

As with other Type 21 frigates *Ambuscade* suffered from cracking in her hull. In 1983, *Ambuscade* collided with USS *Dale* in the Indian Ocean, resulting in part of her bows being torn away. *Ambuscade* was laid up in Bombay for six weeks while a new bow was constructed and fitted. She was sold to Pakistan in 1993 and is still in service as the PNS *Tariq*.

HMS *Avenger*

Type 21 Frigate

Decommissioned and sold to Pakistan on 23 September 1994, HMS *Avenger* was refitted and renamed PNS *Tippu Sultan*. She too is still in active service.

HMS *Arrow*

Type 21 Frigate

Another of the Type 21s in service with the Pakistan Navy, HMS *Arrow* was sold on 1 March 1994, and is now the PNS *Khaibar*.

HMS *Andromeda*

Leander-class Frigate

After the Falklands War *Andromeda*'s deployments included the Armilla Patrol which is the Royal Navy's permanent presence in the Persian Gulf. On 22 August 1995, *Andromeda* was sold to the Indian Navy. Renamed INS *Krishina*, she was used as a training ship until 2009.

HMS *Argonaut*

Leander-class Frigate

HMS *Argonaut*'s most publicised action after the Falklands War was in 1987, when she rescued Richard Branson who came down in the sea during an attempt to cross the Atlantic in a hot-air balloon. *Argonaut* rescued both Branson and his balloon. She was de-commissioned on 31 March 1993, and scrapped two years later.

HMS *Minerva*

Leander-class Frigate

Shortly after returning from the Falklands, on 22 November 1982, HMS *Minerva* rammed the Rothesay-class frigate *Yarmouth*'s stern whilst docking at Portland. *Minerva* returned to the South Atlantic on patrol between October 1984 and March 1985. In March 1992 she was decommissioned and sold for scrap in July the following year.

ABOVE FAR LEFT: The Chilean Navy's County-class destroyer *Almirante Cochrane* entering port on 15 October 1995, whilst participating in a joint exercise, *Unitas* XXXVI, with the US Navy. (US Navy)

ABOVE: The Brazilian Navy's BNS *Greenhalgh*, formerly the Falklands veteran HMS *Broadsword*, at sea in the Atlantic during a training exercise in 2008. (US Navy)

RIGHT: The former HMS *Penelope* is delivered to the Ecuadorian Navy in 1991, the start of a seventeen year career in the service of this nation.

BELOW: A forlorn-looking HMS *Glasgow* is pictured leaving Portsmouth, under tow, en route to the breakers, 7 January 2009. (Courtesy of Brian Burnell)

HMS *Penelope*

Leander-class Frigate

Though she returned to the UK in September 1982, HMS *Penelope* was soon back in the South Atlantic where she remained until June 1983. The following year, *Penelope* deployed to the South Atlantic yet again, patrolling and performing other duties in that region. In 1988, *Penelope* lost steering and collided with the starboard side of the HMCS *Preserver*, a Canadian supply ship. The *Penelope* caught the *Preserver*'s starboard anchor, tearing open her port side. The frigate suffered extensive, and costly, damage. She was sold to the Ecuadorian navy in 1991, being re-named *Presidente Eloy Alfaro*, eventually being decommissioned on 19 March 2008.

HMS *Yarmouth*

Rothesay-class Frigate

During the Falklands War, HMS *Yarmouth* fired over 1,000 rounds from her 4.5-inch guns, mostly during shore bombardment. The frigate was decommissioned in 1986. The following year she was towed out to the North Atlantic and sunk by weapons from HMS *Manchester* in that year's *SinkEx* (or Sink Exercise) on 16 June 1987.

HMS *Plymouth*

Rothesay-class Frigate

Plymouth's service after the Falklands War saw two unfortunate incidents. On 11 March 1984, *Plymouth* was involved in a collision with the German Frigate FGS *Braunschweig* and then, in 1986, she suffered a boiler room fire in which two of her crew were killed. *Plymouth* was decommissioned on 28 April 1988, at which point she was the last Type 12 in service. Acquired by the Warship Preservation Trust, *Plymouth* was towed to Glasgow and placed on display at a berth on the Clyde. Later she was relocated to Birkenhead where she remained on show. On 6 February 2006, the Warship Preservation Trust closed, leaving *Plymouth* in the hands of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company. She remains at Birkenhead.

HMS *Endurance*

Ice Patrol Vessel

Unknown to many people prior to the Falklands War, HMS *Endurance* was due to be withdrawn from service with the Royal Navy on 15 April 1982, but the Argentine invasion extended her active life for a further seven years. In 1989 she struck an iceberg and although she was repaired, it was not thought that it was safe for her now weakened hull to be exposed to such dangers again. She decommissioned in 1991 and replaced by the MV *Polar Circle*, later renamed HMS *Endurance*.

PENELOPE
F127

HMS *Leeds Castle*

Castle-class Patrol Vessel

After her involvement with the Task Force, HMS *Leeds Castle* was deployed around the United Kingdom on fishery protection duties and served as the Falklands guard vessel, alternating with her sister ship, HMS *Dumbarton Castle*. She was decommissioned on 8 August 2005, and sold to the Bangladeshi Navy in 2010. She is now the BNS *Dhaleshwari*.

HMS *Dumbarton Castle*

Castle-class Patrol Vessel

HMS *Dumbarton Castle* spent her time with the Royal Navy on fishery protection as well as protecting the UK's oil and gas installations around the coasts. She conducted alternate tours as Falklands guard ship with HMS *Leeds Castle*. She too was sold to Bangladesh in April 2010, becoming the BNS *Bijoy* after a major refit at Newcastle upon Tyne.

HMS *Conqueror*

Churchill-class Nuclear-Powered Fleet Submarine

The only nuclear-powered submarine known to have engaged an enemy ship with torpedoes, HMS *Conqueror* was decommissioned in 1990. She was a museum ship at her home port of Faslane, until, because of her deteriorating condition she was towed to Devonport where, along with other nuclear submarines, she still resides. The periscopes, captain's cabin and main control panel from the submarine's manoeuvring room can be viewed in the Royal Navy Submarine Museum at Gosport.

HMS *Courageous*

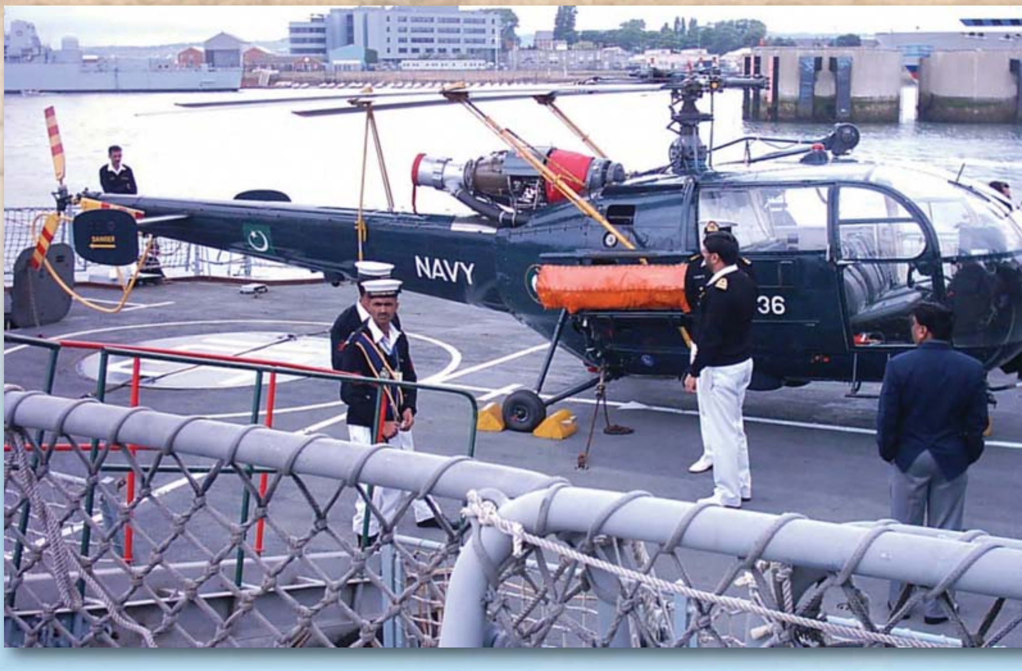
Churchill-class Nuclear-Powered Fleet Submarine

HMS *Courageous* was paid off in April 1992 being fully de-fuelled and laid up at Devonport. In 2002 she was opened to the public becoming a museum ship at Devonport Dockyard. Consequently, she is opened to the public on occasions, but only those areas forward of the machinery spaces.

HMS *Onyx*

Oberon-class Submarine

The only non-nuclear submarine of the Royal Navy to take part in the Falklands War, HMS *Onyx* was decommissioned in 1991. She was taken over by the Warship Preservation Trust and put on public display at Birkenhead. In May 2006, HMS *Onyx* was sold to the Barrow-in-Furness businessman Joe Mullen as "a gift to the people of Barrow" and is now part of the town's Submarine Heritage Centre.



ABOVE: A Pakistan Naval Air Arm Alouette III helicopter onboard PNS Tippu Sultan (the former HMS *Avenger*) during the International Festival of the Sea held at Portsmouth in 2005.

RIGHT: The weathered *Rothesay*-class frigate HMS *Yarmouth* pictured underway during the Falklands War on 5 June 1982. *Yarmouth's* unofficial nickname was "The Crazy Y".

BELOW and BELOW RIGHT: The weather-beaten former *HMS Plymouth* at Birkenhead in June 2011. (Courtesy of John Barton)

HMS *Valiant*

Valiant Class Submarine

Following the development of engine trouble in June 1994, HMS *Valiant* was decommissioned on 12 August 1994. She too is currently at Devonport Dockyard awaiting future disposal. HMS *Valiant* was one of the first Royal Navy submarines to have her reactor removed, and despite being considered for the role of museum ship to represent the British SSN fleet during the Cold War, this work caused so much damage that this suggestion was abandoned in favour of HMS *Courageous*. Components have since been removed from HMS *Valiant* to restore *Courageous*.

HMS *Spartan*

Swiftsure-class Nuclear-Powered Fleet Submarine

Spartan was decommissioned in 2006.

HMS *Splendid*

Swiftsure-class Nuclear-Powered Fleet Submarine

One of the first Royal Navy submarines to reach the South Atlantic in mid-April 1982, HMS *Splendid* was decommissioned in 2004.

HMS *Heckla*

Hecla-class Survey Vessel

Heckla remained in service until being sold in 1997. Renamed *Bligh*, she has been used on hydrographic survey work off the Irish coast.

HMS *Herald*

Hecla-class Survey Vessel

Like her sister ship, *Heckla*, after decommissioning (in May 2001) *Herald* was sold and, following a refit, was involved in a hydrographic survey off the Irish coast. She was re-named *Sommerville*.

HMS *Hydra*

Hecla-class Survey Vessel

HMS *Hydra* was sold to the Indonesian Navy in 1996, being renamed KRI *Dewa Kembar*.

RFA *Olna*

Ol-class Fast Fleet Tanker

After the Falklands War, RFA *Olna* was deployed in the Persian Gulf during the 1990 Gulf War (Operation *Granby*), being mothballed in 1999 at Gibraltar. Though she was temporarily brought out of retirement in 2000 because of a deployment by British forces in Sierra Leone, she was fully decommissioned on 24 September of that year. She was sold to the Leyal ship dismantling yard but was finally scrapped in India in June 2001.

RFA *Olmeda*

Ol-class Fast Fleet Tanker

Like her sister ship above, *Olmeda* was involved in Operation *Granby*, acting as a station tanker in the Eastern Mediterranean, re-fueling ships transiting to and from the Gulf. She was decommissioned in 1993, also being scrapped in India.

RFA *Tidespring*

Tide-class Replenishment Oiler

RFA *Tidespring* had been due to be scrapped in 1982 but the Falklands conflict extended her career for another ten years. She finally sailed from Portsmouth in tow on 20 March 1992 for the breakers, arriving in Port Alang, India for demolition on 2 July 1992.

RFA *Tidepool*

Tide-class Replenishment Oiler

Like her sister, *Tidespring*, RFA *Tidepool* was due to be disposed of in 1982 and was actually on her way to join the Chilean Navy when the Falkland Islands were invaded. With the recapture of the islands, *Tidepool* was finally handed over to the Chileans on 13 August 1982. She was re-named *Almirante Jorge Montt*.

LEFT: **HMS *Courageous* at Devonport Dockyard in 2002.** (Courtesy of Chris Allen; www.geograph.org.uk)

BELOW: **RFA *Sir Tristram* being carried home by the heavy lift ship MV *Dan Lifter* in 1983, the extensive damage caused by the Argentine A-4 Skyhawks clearly visible.**

RFA *Blue Rover*

Fleet Support Tanker

RFA *Blue Rover* was de-commissioned on 23 February 1993. She was purchased by the Portuguese Navy and renamed NRP *Bérrio* on 31 March 1993.

RFA *Appleleaf*

Leaf-class Replenishment Oiler

After Operation *Corporate*, *Appleleaf* was leased to the Royal Australian Navy in an A$30 million, five-year deal, after which, in 1994, she was purchased outright by the Australian Government. She was re-named HMAS *Westralia*. In 2006 she was sold by the Australian Navy, being then used as a floating production storage and offloading vessel under the name *Shiraz*. She was scrapped in 2010 at a Turkish breakers yard.

RFA *Brambleleaf*

Leaf-class Replenishment Oiler

In November 1983 RFA *Brambleleaf* supported British troops in the multi-national force in the Lebanon and in January 1986 she was involved in the evacuation of British and foreign nationals from Aden, following the civil war in the Yemen. In 2009 she was towed to Ghent for disposal.

RFA *Bayleaf*

Leaf-class Replenishment Oiler

RFA *Bayleaf* took part in Operation *Granby* in 1991 and was also deployed in the Second Gulf War from January to April 2003. *Bayleaf* had the unfortunate distinction of having collided with the Royal Yacht *Britannia* whilst on a replenishment at sea task in the Indian Ocean in 1987. *Bayleaf* was decommissioned on 20 April 2011, a victim of the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review.

RFA *Plumleaf*

Leaf-class Replenishment Oiler

Plumleaf was decommissioned in 1986, being sent to Kaohsiung in Taiwan, via Gibraltar, for breaking.

RFA *Pearleaf*

Leaf-class Replenishment Oiler

Pearleaf was leased by the Royal Navy from Jacobs & Partners Ltd, London and immediately after its involvement in Operation *Corporate* she was returned to her owners. She was then sold to Petrostar Co. Ltd of Saudi Arabia. Renamed *Nejmat el Petrol XIX*, she served as a static fuel storage facility. In 1993 she was sent to Pakistan for breaking.

RFA *Sir Tristram*

Round Table-class Landing Ship Logistics

On 8 June 1982, RFA *Sir Tristram* was struck and badly-damaged by a 500lb bomb in Fitzroy Cove. She was abandoned but after the war was re-floated and towed to Stanley where she was used as an accommodation ship. In 1983, RFA *Sir Tristram* was then transported back to the United Kingdom and extensively rebuilt. She was returned to active service in 1985, and saw action in both the Gulf War and the Balkan War in the 1990s. The ship supported relief operations for Hurricane *Mitch* off Central America and in 2000 was deployed to Sierra Leone in support of British operations, returning there for a second deployment the following year. *Sir Tristram* was also involved in supporting British forces in the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Her service ended when she was decommissioned on 17 December 2005, but continues to be used for training purposes by the Special Boat Service.

RFA *Sir Bedivere*

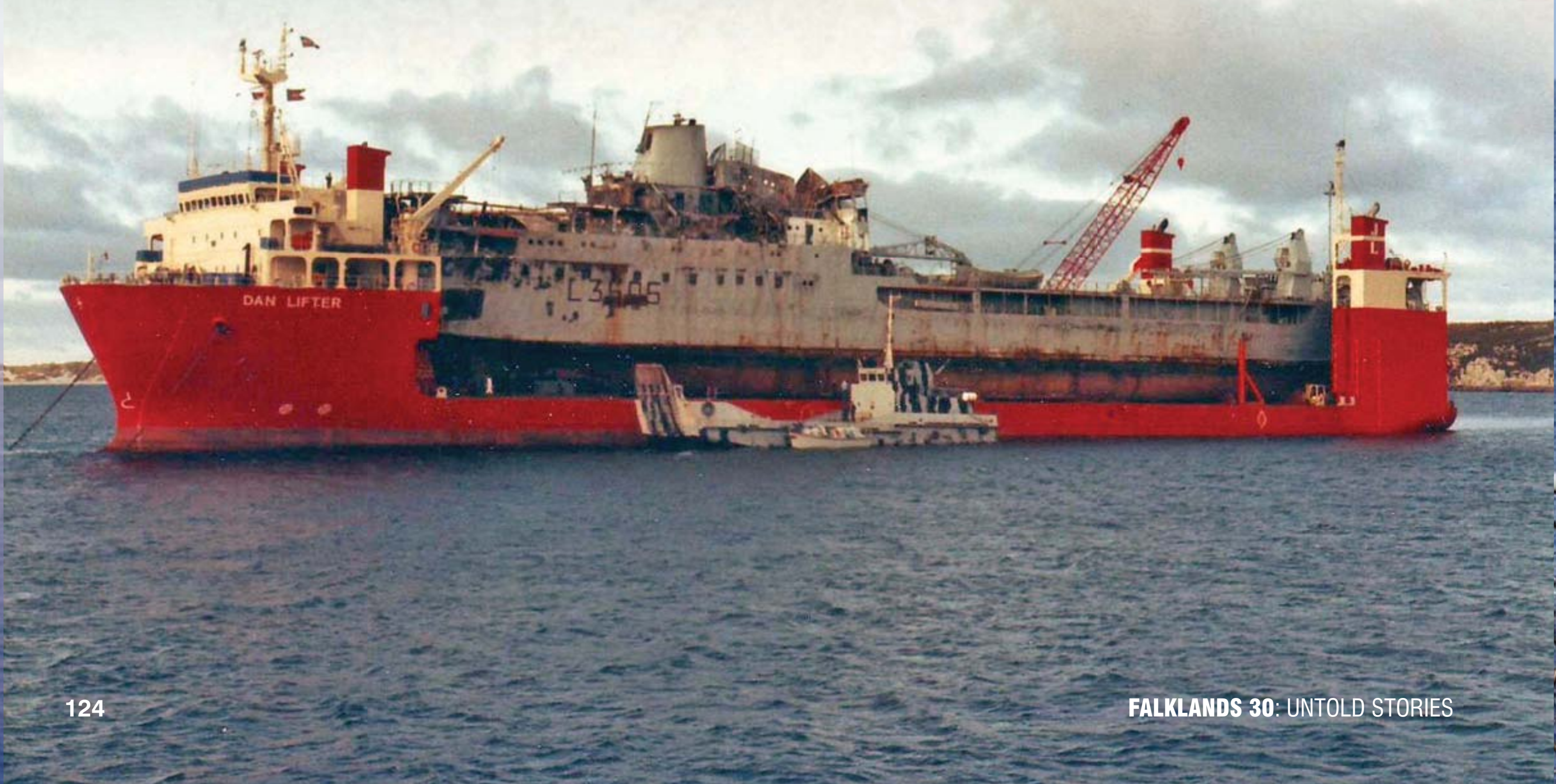
Round Table-class Landing Ship Logistics

Sir Bedivere was deployed to the Persian Gulf in 1991 during the Gulf War as well as in Sierra Leone in 2000. She was also operated as the command vessel for British and American mine countermeasures ships during Operation *Telic* in 2003. In May 2009 she was sold to the Brazilian Navy and commissioned as NDCC *Almirante Saboia*.

RFA *Sir Geraint*

Round Table-class Landing Ship Logistics

Sir Geraint remained in service until being decommissioned on 1 May 2003, subsequently being sold in July 2005. Renamed *Sir G*, she remained in commercial hands until scrapped in India in December the same year.



RIGHT: **The Portuguese Navy's NRP *Bérrio*, ex-RFA *Blue Rover*, in November 2007.**

BELOW: **The former RFA *Stromness* sinking on 27 October 2010 – US Navy personnel look on as fire takes hold. Note the damage to the ship's hull caused by the impact of shells or missiles. During the *SinkEx* exercise, the US Navy's guided-missile destroyer USS *Mitscher* and the guided-missile cruisers USS *Philippine Sea* and USS *Gettysburg* launched missiles and fired their 5-inch guns, Close-In Weapons Systems, and 25-mm and .50-cal weapons at the former supply ship. In addition, aircraft and helicopters launched from USS *Bush* employed bombs and air-to-surface missiles.** (Courtesy of Nick Hall)

RFA *Sir Lancelot*

Round Table-class Landing Ship Logistics

The lead-ship of her class, RFA *Sir Lancelot* was decommissioned and sold in 1989 to the South African company Lowline and renamed *Lowland Lancer*, being used as a Channel ferry, then a floating casino. In 1992 she was purchased by the Republic of Singapore Navy, becoming RSS *Perseverance*. She was sold again in 2003, to Glenn Defense Marine Asia, this time being named *Glenn Braveheart*, the ship used as a protection vessel for those ships believed to be under terrorist threat. In 2008 she was scrapped at Chittagong in Bangladesh.

RFA *Sir Percivale*

Round Table-class Landing Ship Logistics

This ship also served in the Gulf War in 1991 and was twice deployed to the Adriatic to support British operations in the Balkans. In 2000, *Sir Percivale* was deployed to Sierra Leone where she received the hostages rescued by British Special Forces engaged in Operation *Barras*. *Sir Percivale* has also been employed in operations related to Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003. *Sir Percivale* was decommissioned on 17 August 2004, and was laid up alongside at Marchwood Military Port, Southampton. She was scrapped at Liverpool at the end of December 2009.

RFA *Regent*

Fort-class Auxiliary Support Vessel

During the Falklands War, RFA *Regent* spent 148 days at sea and sailed more than 35,000 nautical miles. She was subsequently involved in Operation *Granby* but was decommissioned on October 1992 and scrapped in India in 1993.

RFA *Resource*

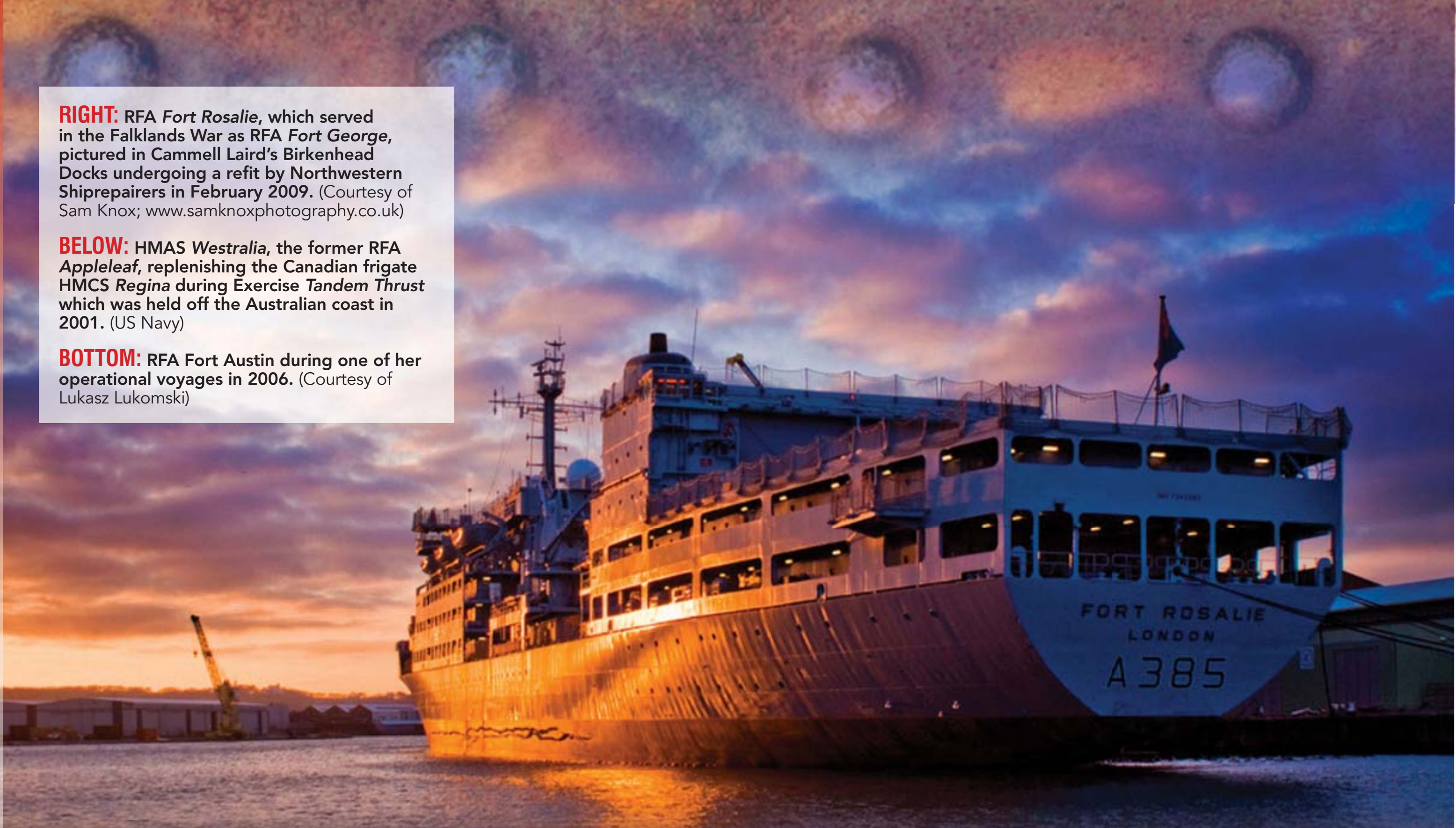
Fort-class Auxiliary Support Vessel

RFA *Resource* was involved in Operation *Granby* and Operation *Haven* in which she provided support to Kurdish refugees in the Turkey/Iraq frontier area in 1991. She was based at Split during the Balkans War, being used as a floating warehouse. Like *Regent* she was scrapped in Alang, India, where she arrived on 20 August 1997.

RIGHT: **RFA *Fort Rosalie*, which served in the Falklands War as RFA *Fort George*, pictured in Cammell Laird's Birkenhead Docks undergoing a refit by Northwestern Shiprepairers in February 2009.** (Courtesy of Sam Knox; www.samknoxphotography.co.uk)

BELOW: **HMAS *Westralia*, the former RFA *Appleleaf*, replenishing the Canadian frigate HMCS *Regina* during Exercise *Tandem Thrust* which was held off the Australian coast in 2001.** (US Navy)

BOTTOM: **RFA Fort Austin during one of her operational voyages in 2006.** (Courtesy of Lukasz Lukomski)



RFA *Fort Grange*

Fort-class Auxiliary Support Vessel

After the Falklands War *Fort Grange* was involved in Operation *Granby*, humanitarian operations in Bangladesh in the wake of a cyclone that hit the country in 1991 (Operation *Manna*) and was based at Split during the Balkans conflict from April to December 1994. At Split she was used as accommodation and storage ship for food and ammunition for the British Forces operating in Croatia. She again returned to Split in January 2000. On 1 June 2000 she was renamed *Fort Rosalie* to avoid confusion with RFA *Fort George*. She remains in service.

RFA *Fort Austin*

Fort-class Auxiliary Support Vessel

Having been involved in supporting British forces in Sierra Leone, *Fort Austin* was placed on the Reserve List in the summer of 2009. However, the ship was taken to Cammell Lairds Shipyard in Birkenhead for refitting on 27 May 2011. It is expected that she will then remain in service until 2021.

RFA *Stromness*

Ness-class Fleet Stores Support Ship

In January 1983 agreement was reached for *Stromness*, known to those who served on her as "Strom", to be sold to the US Navy, and eleven months later she became the Combat Stores Ship USNS *Saturn* operated by Military Sealift Command. She remained in US naval service until April 2009, and was later designated for target use. She was sunk in a *SinkEx* off the coast of North Carolina on 27 October 2010, having been used as a missile and gunnery target by aircraft, helicopters and ships assigned to the George H.W. Bush Carrier Strike Group.

FORT AUSTIN
A386

RFA *Engadine*

Helicopter Support Ship

RFA *Engadine* was decommissioned in 1989 and sold to a shipping company at Piraeus, Greece where it was expected that she would continue in service. This did not happen and she was broken up in India in 1996.

SHIPS TAKEN UP FROM TRADE

The Falklands War saw a diversity of Ships Taken Up From Trade, often referred to as STUFT, from tankers capable of transporting water and fuels, freighters carrying food and munitions to luxury ocean-going liners converted to troop ships. Without the lifeline that these merchant ships provided, Operation *Corporate* could never have taken place.

Liners **SS *Canberra*, RMS *Queen Elizabeth II*, SS *Uganda***

Tankers **MV *Alvega*, MV *Anco Charger*, MV *Balder London*, MV *British Avon*, MV *British Dart*, MV *British Esk*, MV *British Tamar*, MV *British Tay*, MV *British Test*, MV *British Trent*, MV *British Wye*, MV *Fort Toronto*, MV *G.A. Walker*, MV *Scottish Eagle*, MV *Shell Eburna***

Roll-on Roll-off General Cargo **SS *Atlantic Causeway*, SS *Atlantic Conveyor*, MV *Baltic Ferry*, MV *Contender Bezant*, MV *Elk*, MV *Europic Ferry*, MV *Nordic Ferry*, MV *Tor Caledonia***

Container Ship **MV *Astronomer***

Passenger and General Cargo **MV *Norland*, TEV *Rangatira*, MV *Saint Edmund*, RMS *Saint Helena***

General Cargo **MV *Avelona Star*, MC *Geestport*, MV *Laertes*, MV *Lycaon*, MV *Saxonia*, MV *Strathewe***

Offshore Support Vessels **MV *British Enterprise III*, MV *Stena Inspector*, MV *Stean Seaspread*, MV *Wimpey Seahorse***

Tugs **MT *Irishman*, MT *Salvageman*, MT *Yorkshireman***

Cable Ships **CS *Iris***

Commissioned as Mine Counter-Measures Vessels **MV *Cordella*, MV *Farnella*, MV *Junella*, MV *Northella*, MV *Pict***

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REMEMBERING THOSE WHO SERVED

The **Falklands War** lasted seventy-four days and by its end 255 British personnel, three Falkland Islanders, and 649 Argentine servicemen had been killed, writes Geoff Simpson. Added to this there were an additional 1,188 Argentine and 777 British non-fatal casualties, along with the many who received no physical injury but have suffered in silence ever since.

Of the British fatalities, it was the Army that suffered the biggest losses – a total of 123, comprising seven officers, forty NCOs and seventy-six privates. Eighty-eight Royal Navy personnel were killed, along with twenty-seven Royal Marines (two officers, fourteen NCOs and eleven marines), eight Royal Fleet Auxiliary crewmen (including four Hong Kong laundrymen) and eight from the Merchant Navy (again including two Hong Kong sailors). The Royal Air Force suffered one fatal casualty.

Thirty-three of the British Army's dead came from the Welsh Guards, twenty-one from the 3rd Battalion, the Parachute Regiment, eighteen from the 2nd Battalion, the Parachute Regiment, nineteen from the Special Air Service, three from Royal Signals and eight from each of the Scots Guards and Royal Engineers. The 1st Battalion, 7th (Duke of Edinburgh's Own) Gurkha Rifles lost one man killed.

Of the Royal Navy dead, twenty-two were lost in HMS *Ardent*, twenty in HMS *Sheffield*, twenty in HMS *Coventry* and thirteen in HMS *Glamorgan*. Fourteen naval cooks were among the dead, the largest number from any one branch in the Royal Navy.

*

A very active association exists for those people associated with the Falklands War and in the tradition of many old comrades' bodies from earlier wars it takes its name from the award for service which was made.

The South Atlantic Medal is the name of the award made to almost 30,000 service men and women and civilians who played their part in the liberation of the Falkland Islands and South Georgia in 1982. Those who served thirty days in the operational zone, which included Ascension Island, qualified for the medal. Personnel who spent one day or more on the Falklands or South Georgia during the conflict also qualified for a silver rosette.

The obverse side of the curpo-nickel medal has the crowned profile of Queen Elizabeth II. The reverse side has a laurel wreath below the arms of the Falkland Islands with the words "South Atlantic Medal" around the top. The ribbon is composed of a watery blue, white and green, making it similar to the Second World War Atlantic Star. No clasps were issued.

The full qualification stipulations for the medal are: "A period of service of thirty days or more in the South Atlantic, south of seven degrees south and north of sixty degrees south, between the inclusive dates of 2 April and 12 June 1982. The thirty days of

SAM

service did not have to be consecutive."

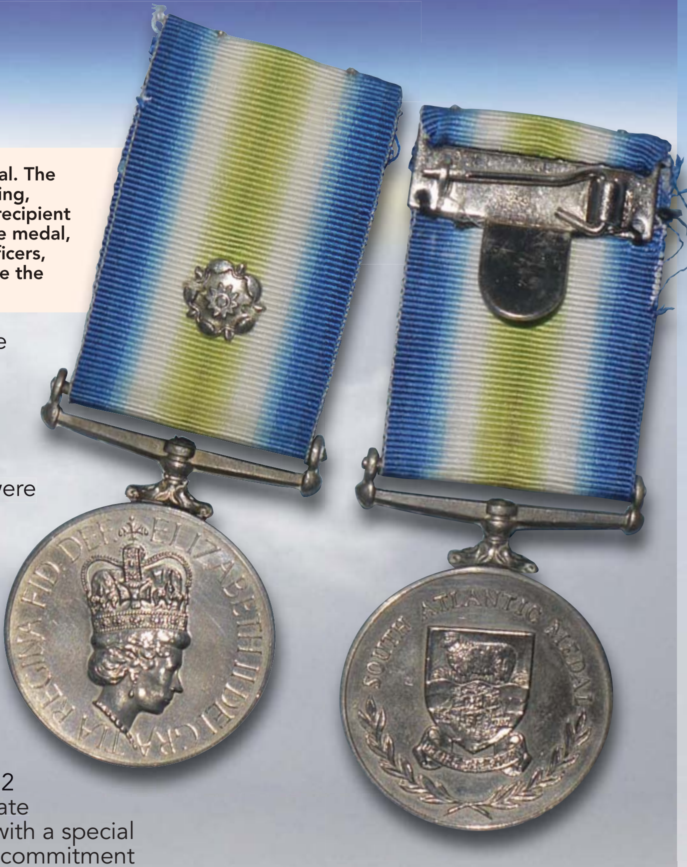
To be eligible for the rosette, an unusual feature for a British medal, the following requirements had to be met: "A period of service of one or more days in the Falkland Islands, or their South Atlantic dependencies, or in a zone between thirty five degrees south and sixty degrees south, or in any operational aircraft sorties out of Ascension Island between the inclusive dates of 2 April and 14 June 1982; the 14 June being the date of the Argentine Forces ceased fire on East Falkland."

Bringing together those who took part in the fighting, The South Atlantic Medal Association 1982 (SAMA 82) was established in 1997 as a means of retaining the comradeship of the time amongst holders of the medal and others with strong connections with the campaign.

Today, the Royal Patron of SAMA 82 is HRH the Prince of Wales, whilst the Chairman of the Trustees is Mike Bowles MBE, who served in both the Royal Navy and the Army, retiring in the rank of Colonel. Two SAMA 82 secretarial staff work on a part-time basis from an office in the village of New Inn, near Pontypool in South Wales.

The SAMA 82 family is wide-ranging, and there are five categories of membership. Full membership is open to those who hold the medal. They have a full vote in the affairs of the association.

LEFT: Graves and the memorial wall in Blue Beach Military Cemetery at San Carlos. The memorial commemorates "the sailors, soldiers and airmen who gave their lives and who have no grave but the sea. Here beside the graves of their comrades this memorial records their names."



RIGHT: The South Atlantic Medal. The initials and surname, rank or rating, service number and unit of the recipient are engraved on the edge of the medal, though those for Royal Navy officers, as is the tradition, do not include the service number.

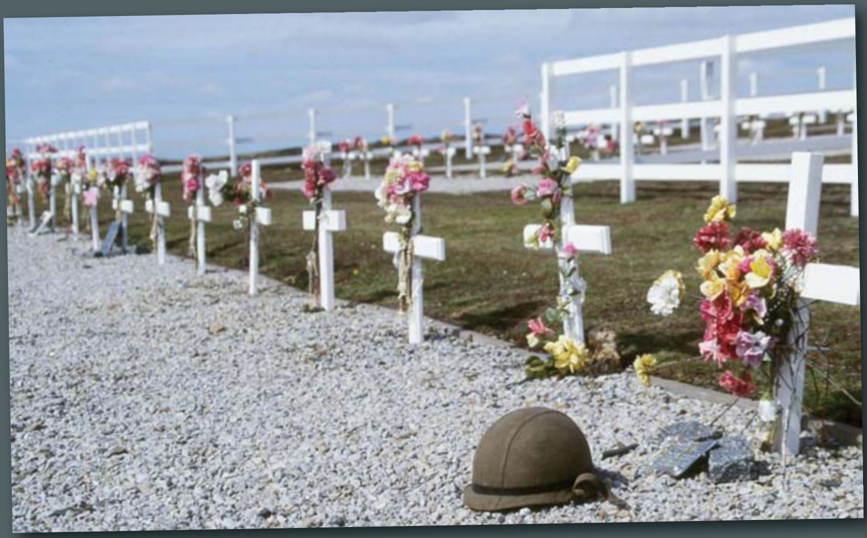
Special membership is available to next of kin of those who died in the South Atlantic campaign – the first 258 membership numbers were allocated for this purpose and that remains the case today. Island Membership, meanwhile, is available to all Falkland Islanders on application. Honorary membership can go to those who have made a major contribution to SAMA 82, or to distinguished figures who influenced the events of 1982 in the South Atlantic. Associate membership goes to those with a special affection for the islands or a commitment to the aims of SAMA 82.

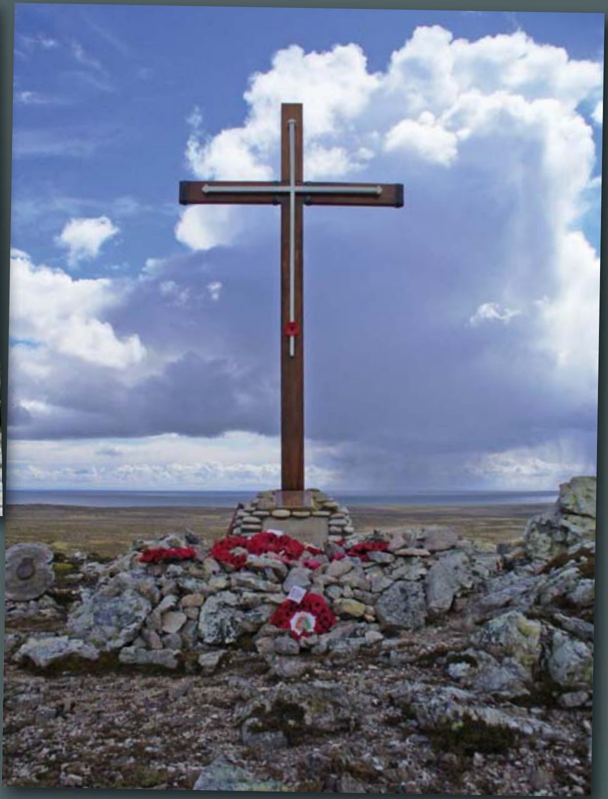
Inevitably the Association will be involved in a large number of commemorations during the 30th anniversary in 2012. Return visits and a week-long pilgrimage to the Falklands in November 2012 are planned, though given the need to book flights a long way ahead, applications for the pilgrimage have already closed. There will be fifty places on the pilgrimage for veterans and family members of those who were lost. Amongst the veterans, priority is being given to those who have not returned to the scenes of the fighting since 1982.

Memorials to the events of 1982 can be found around the world. The Falkland Islands Memorial Chapel at Pangbourne College in Berkshire, is one example. It was built to commemorate the lives and sacrifice of all those who died in the South Atlantic in 1982, as well as the courage of the thousands of servicemen and women who fought alongside them.

In June 2011, Simon Weston, OBE,

BELOW: Veterans of the Falklands War, returning to the South Atlantic, visit the jetty at Blue Beach, San Carlos settlement, to remember the events of 1982, their part in the conflict, those who were injured and the many who did not return. (Courtesy of Tim Lynch)





badly burned during the bombing of RFA *Sir Galahad*, launched the plans and fund-raising appeal for a new Falklands Memorial which, commissioned by SAMA 82, will be placed at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. "The memorial will be distinctive, with a curved wall of rugged stone facing a rock from the Falklands and two benches, creating a restful space for contemplation by visitors," said Mike Bowles.

There is another memorial maintained by SAMA 82 – the Garden of Remembrance on the organisation's website. Administered by one of the best known veterans of the campaign, Dr Rick Jolly, the website manages to be both workmanlike and moving.

Service casualties of the conflict are listed in alphabetical order, from Private J.J. Absolon, MM, 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, through to Bosun S.C. Yu of the RFA *Sir Tristram*. There too are the names of three Falkland Islanders killed during the fighting: Mrs Doreen Bonner, Mrs Mary Goodwin and Mrs Susan Whitley.

"This site exists as a memorial to those who gallantly gave their lives to restore freedom and liberty to the Falkland Islands," explains Dr Jolly. "There is not a day goes by when that supreme sacrifice is not remembered. Each individual is some mother's son, a husband, a father, a brother, a friend, a comrade-in-arms.

"Each has their own story of resolve and personal courage, and where we can we have gathered those stories and added them to a special page, together with brief biographical data, so that we who survive may reminisce, reflect and remember." ■

ABOVE LEFT: This helmet, taken as a trophy at Goose Green, belonged to Eusebio Aguilar who, at 16, was the youngest soldier to die in the war. It was returned to the islands during a veterans' pilgrimage in 2002, and is seen here in front of his grave. (Courtesy of Tim Lynch)

ABOVE RIGHT: The HMS *Coventry* memorial on Pebble Island. (Courtesy of Jon Cooksey)

BELOW: Poppy wreaths laid at the base of a memorial on the Falkland Islands. The website of The South Atlantic Medal Association 1982 can be found at: www.sama82.org.uk (Courtesy of Tim Lynch)

FROM YOUR FRIENDS
– THE PILGRIMS
In Remembrance
SAMA 82
The South Atlantic Medal Association
FROM THE SEA FREEDOM

30 years on, Veterans are still fighting for peace

On the 14th of June this year it will have been 30 years since the Falklands War ended. But for many Falklands Veterans, the battle still rages in their minds.

Combat Stress is the leading UK charity specialising in the care of Veterans' mental ill health. We are supporting over 200 Veterans who served in the Falklands War and who, 30 years on, are still suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, anxiety, paranoia or depression from what they endured in battle.

We know there are hundreds more out there who need our help.

Your donation today can help us to reach more Veterans and provide them with the expert treatment and support they urgently need.

Darren's story

Darren Horsnell joined the 4th Field Regt, Royal Artillery at sixteen and was nineteen in 1982 when they were deployed to the Falklands. Here he bravely shares some of his experiences to explain why treatment is so vital.

'I saw the Argentinean jets coming down bomb alley and opening fire on our ships, dropping their bombs. A feeling of uselessness came over me. Our men were sitting targets. We were firing small arms at the airplanes and I remember screaming at them, "Leave them alone!" I still wake up screaming.

Later I was injured and evacuated to the field hospital. While they were operating on my right calf, I could see the body of a guy in the next bed who had had his back blown out. I used to dream about this guy and in the dream he'd turn around and start talking to me.

When I came home I didn't tell anybody that I was having nightmares, or flashbacks. But all that was sinking deeper and deeper into me, and obviously it was getting harder to hide. But I was in denial.

It was everyone around me who had the problem, not me. It was nearly 14 years before I got any help. My [then] wife forced me to go and see my GP, who told me about Combat Stress. They assessed me and diagnosed me with PTSD.

One day, the Activities Centre Manager said to me, 'Why don't you try some art therapy?' When I was painting it took all the bad memories away. I am now teaching other Veterans to paint. It is a great form of therapy.

I also do Cognitive Behavioural Therapy at Combat Stress, once a month. And I am on a health management course too. I can honestly say Combat Stress saved my life. Without them I don't think I would be here today.'

'Quite simply, your generosity saves lives.'

Darren Horsnell, Falklands Veteran

Please help us bring peace to more Veterans and their families.

Add your details below and send your donation, or donate at combatstress.org.uk

Here is my donation of:

☐ **£25** can help pay for a one hour session with one of our Registered Mental Health Nurses

☐ **£40** can pay for a session of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy to help a Veteran like Darren

☐ My preferred amount of: £ ____________________

☐ I enclose a cheque (payable to Combat Stress) OR ☐ Please debit my Mastercard / Visa / Maestro / AMEX / CAF card

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I understand that I must have paid an amount of income tax/capital gains tax at least equal to the amount that the charity will reclaim in the year that the gift was received.

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FALK30/AD26

Combat Stress would like to hold your details in order to contact you about our fundraising, campaigning and support services. If you would prefer us not to use your details, please tick this box. ☐

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APPEAL

AIRFIX

FALKLANDS AT 30 1982 2012

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The main opposition over the Falkland Islands in 1982 to the Harriers of both the Royal Navy and the R.A.F. were the two smaller aircraft flown by the Argentine Air Force, namely the American built Douglas A-4 Skyhawk (Airfix's brand new tool) operating from the mainland, and the Argentinian built Pucara, operating from Port Stanley runway and two other grass airstrips on the Islands.

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Falklands War Special
1:72 FMA-IA58 PUCARA

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Douglas A-4B SKYHAWK

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